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March • April 12

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Once again, *realscreen* has compiled a list of the top 100 production companies working in non-fiction, as voted upon by readers. Check page 33 to see this year's edition of the Global 100. (Cover illustration: Matthew Daley for Shiny Pliers. Logo treatment: Mark Lacoursiere)



THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

As I write this, I've just returned home after having attended the grand opening party for the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema in downtown Toronto. For those unfamiliar with the Bloor, it's a grand old dame of repertory cinema in my home city, originally established in 1913. With changes in ownership and the dwindling numbers for rep cinema, clouds were gathering menacingly and hanging over its future, with the threat of demolition, or at least closure and conversion into condos, looming.

Enter Neil Tabatznik and Steven Silver of Toronto-based producer/financier Blue Ice Group, and Hot Docs. When Hot Docs executive director Chris McDonald introduced the Blue Ice team to the Bloor's previous owners, the Bordonaro family, it set the wheels in motion for what even McDonald calls "a kind of nutty" idea – a 700-seat cinema devoted to non-fiction film. Sure, there are other cinemas in the world that play documentaries exclusively, but they're much, much smaller. Though Hot Docs continues to grow as a festival both in its hometown and on the international stage (see page 16), it's still a risky move, even if the plan is to play 80% documentaries and fill the other 20% with cult hits. You can only see *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* so many times.

Still, it's the bold moves that often yield the biggest and best results, and if there's any city where a 700-seat doc cinema should work, it's the home of Hot Docs.

Shortly after the party I was reminded of another discussion concerning the value of taking risks. At the 2012 Realscreen Summit, we closed the event with a standing-room-only panel, cheekily dubbed "The Great Original Programming Debate." Its premise: in a world where pawn shows seem to be spreading like some cable TV-transmitted virus, and where so many production teams are setting up shoots in Alaska that the state should consider a name change to "Chillywood," what does the concept of "original programming" on cable mean anymore?

It's a discussion that's being had in several circles – CableU recently conducted a study examining the current glut of "artifactual" programming across various U.S. cable nets. While there's no denying that in the TV entertainment world, just as in fast food, there's room for more than one type of hamburger (I'm a Whopper man, myself), you'd better make damn sure that yours has some sort of special sauce that will keep the customer heading back to your drive-through. And crafting that sauce requires ideas, innovation, risk, and varying degrees of mayonnaise.

Okay, enough with the fast food metaphor. Allow me, in closing, to move to baseball. Here's to everyone who always makes the effort to swing for the fences. While they will strike out on occasion, when they actually connect and hit one out of the park, it makes the game that much more enjoyable for all of us.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor
realscreen

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March • April 12 Volume 15, Issue 4

Realscreen is published 6 times a year by Brunico Communications Ltd.,
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ISSN number 1480-1434

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U.S. Postmaster: Send address changes or corrections to *realscreen*, PO Box 1103, Niagara Falls, NY, 14304 |
Canadian Postmaster: Send undeliverables and address changes to *realscreen*, PO Box 369, Beeton, ON,
L0G 1A0. Canada Post Publication Agreement No. 40050265 Printed in Canada

To subscribe, visit www.realscreen.com/subscribe, email realscreencustomer@realscreen.com,
call 416-408-2448, or fax 416-408-0249. Subscription rates for one year: in the US, US\$59.00; in Canada,
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realscreen out & about

From East to West

I'm pleased to report that the team's finally recovered from the biggest, and I think best, Realscreen Summit to date. More than 2,000 delegates converged in DC at the end of January to be inspired, learn, network and make deals.

It's fair to say that I've never had so much follow-up from attendees to let me know just how much business was done. It's immensely gratifying to hear these tidbits and validates our mandate to bring all of the stakeholders in the non-fiction entertainment community together to exchange ideas and drive their businesses forward.

Highlights of the program this year included a fascinating keynote presentation by **Lauren Zalaznick**, chairman, NBCUniversal Entertainment & Digital Networks and Integrated Media, which examined why viewers connect with characters on particular non-fiction shows; an entertaining and revealing fireside chat between **David Lyle**, CEO, National Geographic Channels U.S. and **Craig Piligian**, executive producer and CEO, Pilgrim Studios; a conversation with **Robert DeBitetto**, president and general manager, A&E Network and BIO Channel, and **Nancy Dubuc**, president and general manager, History and Lifetime Networks; and The Great Original Programming Debate – a raucous discussion about original programming expertly moderated by NHNZ's **Phil Fairclough** and featuring **Marc Juris**, EVP and COO, truTV; **Brent Montgomery**, owner, Leftfield Pictures; **Jane Root**, founder and CEO, Nutopia; **Rob Sharenow**, EVP programming, Lifetime Networks.

I also offer heartfelt thanks to the 2012 advisory board, which did an incredible job honing in on the subject matter that was the most relevant to the industry and securing an A-list speaker roster. Thanks also to each and every sponsor for supporting the Summit and helping us to take it to the next level, and to every speaker for giving their time to help deliver an amazing program.

And with that, we're on to planning the next mammoth *realscreen* event. **Realscreen West: The Factual Entertainment Forum** takes place in sunny Santa Monica, May 30-31, and features the presentation of this year's anticipated **Factual Entertainment Awards**. This year our judges will be taking a look at well over double the submissions of last year's competition. Good luck to everyone who entered and we hope to welcome you to Santa Monica in May for a fantastic program generated with input from the Realscreen West 2012 advisory board (see pages 38 and 39).

'Til next time, go well
Claire Macdonald
VP & Publisher
realscreen

UPCOMING ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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Editorial features: This issue will feature special reports on stock footage and production music, as well as a reality genre focus and a festival report.

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TRADING SPACES

Several MIPTV veterans will be making their way to the market yet again this year, but this time, with new companies. *Realscreen* spoke to two such execs to find out more about the new portfolios and priorities they'll be bringing with them to Cannes.

BY BARRY WALSH



Bruce Tuchman

President, AMC/Sundance Channel Global

Sundance is currently distributed in several European territories, as well as Canada and Asia; WE tv is distributed in markets within Asia. Are there other markets in which you're actively looking to expand?

We look at the entire world as offering great potential, so there are no markets that we rule out per se. We're always exploring opportunities and as you can see from even the last couple of months, we've made a lot of growth, added new countries, systems and partners. So we're eager to continue our momentum all over the world.

Are you looking for more local production partners in the various markets for each network?

Sundance internationally is distinct and localized, or customized, for the markets that we reach. It's not only the versioning, promos and interstitials, but we're looking to craft schedules that resonate. Some of the commonalities that link the Sundance Channels around the world are, number one, they air great AMC original series. If you're in a Sundance market internationally, you're likely to run into one of our original series and that makes the channel quite compelling. But beyond that, we're airing a lot of great independent films and other content acquired from sources in the U.S. and abroad. So there is quite a mixture on the film side, and we have acquired series from outside of the U.S. Right now, [WE tv] is distributed in a number of markets in Asia, and it's a wholly underserved niche of programming. Audiences are really liking what they're seeing now, judging from what we've brought over from the U.S. — everything from *My Fair Wedding* to *Braxton Family Values*. It's just been a couple of years for WE in the international market, but certainly we're looking at local programming opportunities and getting our hands around the opportunities to do some original production.

What are the key challenges in rolling new brands out internationally? Is the global economic situation impacting expansion plans?

If you've been in the business long enough, we've been through it before. We've had the Asian economic crisis around the turn of the century, and the Latin American crisis in the late '90s, and those were tougher.

You see these crises, but one of the things you don't see as far as Pay TV is concerned is failure in the business, meaning you don't see subscribers decreasing overall — they're still increasing. What's amazing about this industry is how durable and robust it is, and how it's really one of the last things a consumer will want to part with once they have it. So I don't see the economic situation as a challenge, I see it as an opportunity.

The challenge, I think, is that in a world where lots of channels have already launched, apart from perhaps the women's demographic, we're no longer in a world where there's a want for quality programming. There is a lot of good programming out there and there's limited capacity even in a digital environment, and there are transformations afoot — from the old analog, to modest digital, to robust digital environments. So the challenge for everyone is how do you adapt to that and find your space within it.

How big is the team coming to MIP?

It's a tight-knit group — we have our distribution folks, [and] some of our operational folks who will be looking for acquisitions for both channels.

I'll be coming at it now with a different company and a different perspective, but I'm already sensing a great receptivity to what we're doing with Sundance and WE. We think this year is our time to really make a mark in the international arena.



Mary Ellen Iwata

VP, original content development, *The Weather Channel*

Now that you've joined The Weather Channel in this role, what is the strategy for original or acquired content — how many hours or slots are you looking to fill?

Right now we are concentrating on primetime seven days a week and in 2012 we are increasing the number of premiere hours by 70%. We are mainly looking to commission original programming but would consider acquisitions. We have a lot of straightforward weather shows in our inventory, so we are not looking for more storm-related programs unless they have a fresh approach and stories that haven't been told.

What sort of latitude do producers have when pitching ideas to you for the channel — is it a purely weather-related niche you're looking to fill, or is it a bit broader?

It's a lot broader than weather "front and center" but the ideas need to make sense for The Weather Channel. We are currently airing two new series — *Coast Guard Alaska* and *Lifeguard!* They are very different shows, but in each series weather has an effect on how the characters perform their jobs. We also created an anthology, 'Braving the Elements,' where we can incubate new ideas. Two series launching under that banner are *Turbine Cowboys* and *Iron Men*. All of these shows have a common thread, which is that they feature people in interesting vocations and [look at] how the elements affect their lives and work, yet they are all so completely different with the people, places and jobs that are featured. We are also open to lighter topics and humor as long as they fit the brand.

In terms of budgets, is there a ballpark that you can give regarding dollars per hour?

The budgets vary depending on the topic, the location, talent, et cetera... I can't really give a ballpark figure but I can say that our budgets are competitive with other lifestyle channels.

Are there genres that you'd like to bring to the channel that you haven't explored yet — for instance, would a competition reality series of some sort work on the network, or be entertained in a pitch meeting?

We are open to all ideas and would definitely be open to a competition series. We've been pitched a few that we are discussing internally. We'll listen to all ideas and watch all the demos because you never know. Plus, we have found that with minor tinkering we can take certain concepts and make them more appropriate for The Weather Channel brand filter.

Tell us about some recent commissions and acquisitions, and how they fit into the new strategy.

In addition to the original programs I mentioned earlier, we recently acquired the series *Ice Pilots* that airs on History Television Canada. It has a great cast of characters and takes place in a remote part of Canada, which creates a lot of drama and jeopardy for the pilots. We're also premiering a new series called *Hurricane Hunters* in July. Looking ahead, we are moving forward on a new series with the producers of *Coast Guard Alaska* which we'll be announcing soon, and we'll be announcing another series within the 'Braving The Elements' anthology. It's also important to us that producers think about and create cross-platform content as they develop their show ideas with us.

What are you looking for at MIPTV? Are you looking into coproductions?

We prefer to fully commission shows, but if a producer comes with coproduction opportunities we are open to that. Weather affects everyone, so it's a universal topic. ■■

Grant Mansfield leaving Zodiak USA

BY BARRY WALSH

Grant Mansfield is leaving his post as CEO of Zodiak USA.

Mansfield, previously group director of factual, entertainment and comedy for the company when it was known as RDF Media Group, uprooted from London in early 2010 to move to Los Angeles, following Chris Coelen's departure from RDF Media USA at the end of 2009. RDF was then acquired by Zodiak a matter of months later, with the global company rebranding as Zodiak Media Group.

Prior to his time with RDF/Zodiak, Mansfield was director of programs at Granada and controller of documentaries, features and arts at ITV.

The company says it will soon be making an announcement regarding a successor. Mansfield will stay with Zodiak USA for a few more months to allow for a smooth transition.

Zodiak USA is the prodco behind truTV's top-rated series *Hardcore Pawn* and its upcoming spin-off, *Hardcore Pawn: Fort Bragg*, as well as *Secret Millionaire* for ABC. ■■





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Hot and getting hotter

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Canadian festival Hot Docs is this year embarking on a raft of new initiatives, launching a bespoke crowdfunding service and revamped conference agenda. *Realscreen* spoke to Hot Docs Forum and market director Elizabeth Radshaw about the changes and growth afoot for the event.

Hot Docs' industry events are becoming a little more audience-centric this year. While industry delegates and ticket holders generally experience the festival in separate silos, organizers of the annual Canadian documentary film festival are hoping its two constituencies will mingle a bit more thanks to new initiatives like Doc Ignite, a crowdfunding platform for filmmakers, and 'Doc to the Future,' a revamped industry conference of tightly-curated, in-depth workshops, speakers and interactive sessions.

Additionally, for the first time, members of the public will be invited to attend an industry session: docmaker Davis Guggenheim's conversation with this year's Doc Mogul award recipient, Participant Media exec VP of documentary films Diane Weyermann.

"We've never crossed over an industry aspect to a public space before," says Elizabeth Radshaw, Hot Docs Forum and marketing director, who is overseeing the conference programming this year. "We have a strong and engaged audience at Hot Docs that loves what we do and has asked in the past, 'How do we help films get made?'"

"Crowdfunding is a natural extension of this new direct dialogue that happens between filmmakers and their audience," she adds.

Unlike crowdfunding platforms Kickstarter and IndieGoGo, Doc Ignite is focused solely on raising funds for Canadian documentaries and will feature six curated projects per year, with

one project featured every 45 days.

So far it appears to be working. The service launched in February with director Jay Cheel's *How to Build a Time Machine* and, at press time, it had drummed up just over half of its CDN\$25,000 (US\$25,160) goal.

Radshaw suggests directors applying to use the service should be prepared to work it. Once chosen, filmmakers train with user experts to develop a strategy, create a concept for the campaign and put together a list of incentives that will be complemented by in-kind incentives offered by the festival.

An added hurdle – at least in the early days – is a lack of awareness among Canadian filmgoers about such platforms compared with their American counterparts. "This is a new concept to a lot of folks," she says. "Our goal is to cultivate a culture of crowdfunding here in Canada."

However, Radshaw doesn't see crowdfunding as a replacement for traditional forum-style fundraising initiatives, such as the Hot Docs Forum.

"It's one part of the piece of the puzzle," she says.


"Funding documentary films is not an easy task. Broadcasters are still the bread and butter of where documentary finance comes from because their screenings are still able to reach the widest audience."

A "curated" feel will extend to 'Doc to the Future,' with sessions based around the theme of new opportunities for audience engagement. Topics include crowdfunding, digital distribution, screening platforms and a 'hack day' – a two-day workshop, presented by Mozilla, during which participants will produce an original web documentary.

In addition to the Guggenheim-Weyermann conversation, sessions include a big picture keynote talk on the industry's future by commentator and filmmaker Ted Hope, media strategist Jon Reiss' half-day workshop on alternative distribution, and workshops on new software tools.

"We're trying to get away from panels," says Radshaw. "It's the filmmaker's responsibility to understand how to open up the dialogue with the audience by using the tools that are out there, from production and distribution to exhibition. That's really the lens that we're looking through." ■





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▶▶ **POINTED ARROW:** *A Producer's Perspective*

BY JOHN SMITHSON

On a panel at the recent Realscreen Summit it was fascinating to hear how four successful companies had very different approaches to development. Like so many things in the indie sector, there is no right way or wrong way — just the best way for each company, forged by the searing experience of a thousand rejected ideas.

Do you target a select few networks or go wide? Do you carpet bomb with ideas in the hope one or two will hit the target, or just pitch your top three? How much do you spend? How detailed do you need to be, and how much do you need to lock in talent or secure access? What size of team and what sort of person do you need?

In an ideal world, the same polymath who comes up with the idea also researches it perfectly, casts it brilliantly and then writes the ultimate proposal. In reality, this might require the talents of three or four people.

Just to make it more difficult, the bar is getting higher. Networks, especially in the U.S., want more and more — sizzle reels, access, casting, talent — yet are



not keen to pay for this.

So how do you do it? It's something very much on our minds as we grow our new indie. Here are some of our own "house rules" that have evolved over the years.

Talk as often as possible to those that commission you. So many ideas have come out of these encounters and very few come completely out of the blue.

Adapt and apply, but don't copy. See what's

working in the key markets and what techniques you can apply to smarten up your idea.

Don't over-develop. We've had much more success with one-paragraph pitches than pages of padding. Plus, a snappy title really does help.

Idea processing is nearly as important as idea creation. Packaging your smart idea into a punchy two-pager can make a real difference.

Target development. Only spend time and money on ideas where you know there is commissioner interest.

Beware passion projects that no one wants to commission. It's much better to kill such projects than to keep flogging a dead horse.

Finally, nothing beats offering the irresistible story, the exclusive access or the hot talent. That's where you should spend your precious time.

John Smithson is creative director of Arrow Media, an indie he co-founded in 2011. Previously he was chief executive at Darlow Smithson Productions. ■■

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BEST PRACTICES

business tips from the pros

BY CHRIS PALMER & ANGELI GABRIEL

HOW TO BALANCE WORK AND HOME LIFE

Many of us tend to be workaholics and neglect our families. Given the many responsibilities of work and home, it's easy to find yourself struggling to balance all of them. Reaching this balance is essential if you want to achieve serenity, fulfillment, and success in your life. In order to be successful in your career and also have a home life which is rich, fun, and rewarding, try to pursue the following five actions:

Identify your most important roles. Roles are your key responsibilities and relationships, both professionally and personally. It is important to decide which ones are the most valuable and worth cultivating. By doing so, you create a variety of perspectives from which to examine your life to ensure balance. For example, if your most important roles are as spouse and parent, and you put that in writing and share it with your family, then you are more likely to keep your work at work in order to spend quality time with your loved ones.

Set goals. Recognizing what you want to achieve is a powerful process. It allows you to focus your energies on turning dreams into reality, and it causes you to stretch and grow in new ways. For example, if you set a goal of having a closer, more emotionally

intimate relationship with your spouse, then you will be more focused on doing that instead of wasting time on trivialities. This will help you to develop increased self-discipline that will benefit you both in and out of the office.

Manage your time wisely. Once you identify those meaningful roles and goals, manage your time accordingly. By focusing on important goals, you lessen your chances of procrastinating or becoming distracted. Many people start their day by checking their email first, which often leads to a litany of smaller tasks to be taken care of all day. But by starting your day accomplishing an important project (for example, apologizing to a family member or friend for losing your temper and yelling at him or her), you will become energized and more confident about your life and keeping it in balance.

Learn to say "No" This can be one of the most difficult skills to learn, but it can make a world of difference on how much time you have to balance your work and home life. By declining requests from others in a friendly and compassionate way, you will be able to focus on your goals and not waste your time and energy on things that are not as meaningful. For example, if a colleague at work asks you

to attend a meeting during the time you originally set aside for your family, consider declining. Of course, that's not always possible, but if you do so respectfully, your co-worker will hopefully understand and you will be able to pursue what is most important to you.

Take care of yourself Last, and certainly not least, you must tend to your own self-development and self-renewal. This involves addressing four dimensions: physical, which includes exercise, relaxation, and a healthy diet; social/emotional, which includes love, friendship, and having a sense of belonging; mental, which involves developing yourself intellectually and building your intellectual capital; and spiritual, which involves finding a purpose and meaning in your life. Taking care of these four dimensions will help you become a more fulfilled and balanced individual with a great capacity for effectively tackling responsibilities both at work and at home.

Professor Chris Palmer is the director of American University's Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of the Sierra Club book "Shooting in the Wild: An Insider's Account of Making Movies in the Animal Kingdom." Angeli Gabriel is an anthropologist, filmmaker, and MA candidate at American University. ■

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The 55-to-64 demographic is the fastest growing in America, and it's a demographic that was raised on television. Yet it's one that has typically been given short shrift by advertisers and media buyers in the U.S. What are the "alpha boomers" looking for in non-fiction entertainment, and are they going to see more of it in the years ahead?

BRINGING IN THE ALPHA BOOMERS

BY BARRY WALSH

Stanley Siegel, host of RLTV
travel series *Stanley On The Go*



Wurtzel

Oprah Winfrey. Bill Gates. Arianna Huffington.

These three are among the most powerful people in media today, and they have other things in common besides their bulging bank accounts. For instance, they're each over 55.

Also, now that they're at that age, nobody seems to give a damn about what they're watching on television.

In the current U.S. television ratings system, once an individual reaches 55 and drops off the 25-to-54 demo, they're no longer measurable except in the general groupings of P2+ or 50+. But in the U.S., the 55-to-64 demo is the fastest growing in the country. And it's a demo with dollars, spending more than US\$1.8 trillion annually, according to a 2010 study conducted by NBCUniversal.

That study, which sought to dig deeper into the 55-to-64 or "Alpha Boomer" demographic, generated much press upon its release, and still

provokes discussion with its findings.

Alan Wurtzel, head of research for NBCUniversal and the commissioner of the study, isn't surprised by that, but wonders why advertisers still seem to be willfully glossing over the generation that grew up with TV. And he's not the only one.

In digging through census data for the study, Wurtzel found that in the U.S., someone turns 55 every seven seconds. "Every seven seconds someone moves into this essentially unmeasured, or certainly unmonetized target and yet they're incredibly valuable," he says. "They account for \$1.8 trillion to spend, and that's a lot of money."

Other findings from the study took media players and watchers alike by surprise – for example, statistics proving that the 55-64 demo is remarkably tech-savvy, and the fact that while the 55-64 demo is rapidly growing, the 18-49 demo, also known as the Holy Grail for



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advertisers and TV networks, is shrinking.

But for those who have been operating for some time in the boomer-friendly media space, while they may not have been surprised by the data, they welcomed its presentation.

"There was nothing in the study that we didn't already inherently know or have data on," says Elliot Jacobson, senior vice president of programming and production for U.S. cable net RLTV (formerly Retirement Living TV), currently available in 15 million U.S. homes. "However, the way it was structured was very effective, and having NBC come out with this was significant validation for us.

"In fact, I'd think our ad sales team would say that it was a game-changer – the fact that NBC acknowledged the importance of this demo and took the time and the investment to put together such a comprehensive study was significant," he adds.

Moses Znaimer, renowned media magnate and founder of Canadian networks Citytv

and MuchMusic, is the force behind ZoomerMedia, a multi-platform mediaco incorporating television via the Vision and ONE cable nets (see Lifestyle Focus, page 59), multiple online properties including Zoomers.ca and 50plus.com (soon to be found under umbrella site Zoomers.com), radio, and print via Zoomer Magazine. He says that while he applauds the attention the study received, it's been a story he's been spreading for years, and one that marketers still seem slow to digest.

"The issue is always monetization," he says. "What does it take for crushing reality to pierce through an industry which prides itself on being forward looking? It has been devastatingly, amazingly slow in turning its attention to the truth, which is that we've got the money, we do the voting, we're living longer, the succeeding generation is smaller, and why are you still spending only 5% of your ad money against that demo?"

It's a question that marketers and network ad sales teams should be grappling with,



Jacobson

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especially in the face of the shrinking 18-49 demo. “What you have is a leaky bucket phenomenon,” says Wurtzel. “The younger people are not replenishing this demo as quickly as the older people are leaving it, so it’s becoming smaller and smaller.”

Wurtzel says that demographic measurements as currently employed by Nielsen might have made sense when they were first rolled out in the 1950s, but they need to evolve to fully capture the needs and habits of the television viewing audience, which is naturally aging.

“Back in the ’50s, when demographics were invented and 25-54 was established as one of the demographic groups, when you were a 64-year-old, your life expectancy was four [more] years. Now, if you’re 64, the life expectancy is 14 years, which takes you to 80.”

Nielsen, for its part, has been sharing its findings regarding the attractiveness of the demographic “outliers” – those under 25 and over 54. A recent study from Nielsen put the number of TV viewing hours per day for the 55-plus demo at 6.5 hours – the highest across any demo. The age group also spends 85 minutes per day online – 15 minutes more than the 12-24 set.

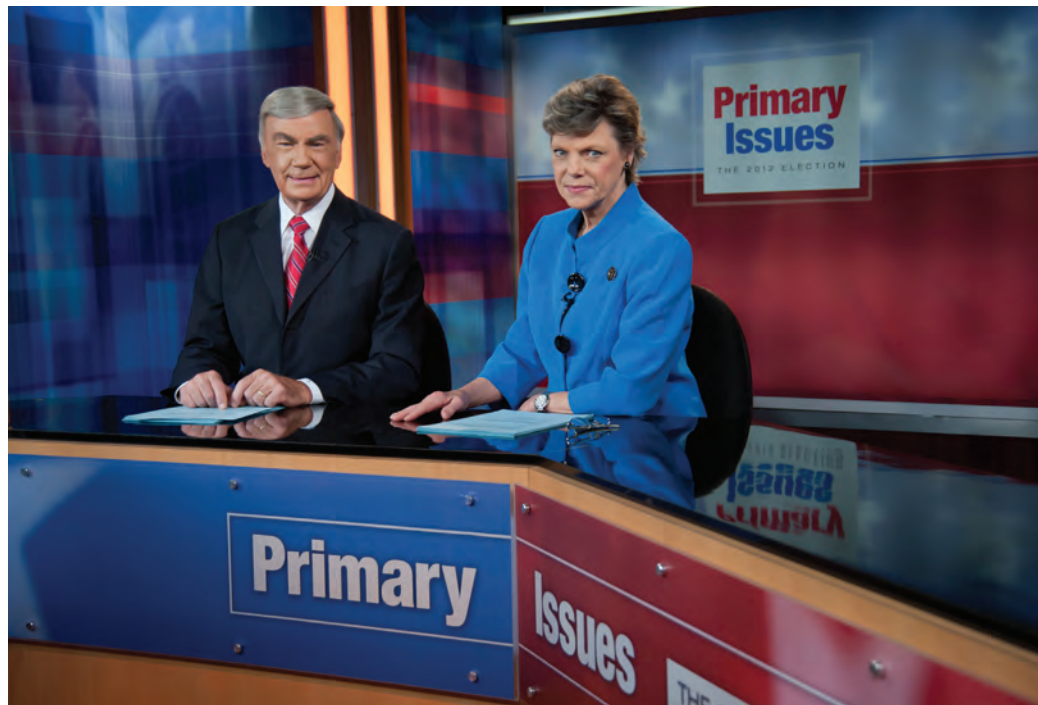
Wurtzel, Znaimer and Jacobson all agree that a large part of the battle in recognizing the value of the alpha boomer audience is convincing media buyers, many of whom tend to be in the younger demos themselves.

“The so-called smart marketer says, ‘We don’t need to try – we have them anyway,’” says Znaimer. “And it’s true – there are large, older audiences scattered among conventional media. But the media themselves are ashamed of this audience, they don’t frame it. I’ve heard it in professional circles called ‘waste.’ If what you’re selling is 18-49 or 25-54, then anything over that 55 [age] number is ‘waste.’”

It’s a concept that’s also mirrored by the general trend of networks “aging down,” or aiming to lower their median viewing ages.

“There would be dancing in the hallways of a network if its median age went down a year,” says Wurtzel. “But that’s going against demographic gravity.”

“A lot of shows that a Nat Geo or History air, geared towards a 35-and-younger audience, still have a general appeal to people that are older,” says Jacobson. “It’s not as if you reach this threshold of 50 or 60 and all of a sudden you’re



Trusted news anchors Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts host RLTV’s election series *Primary Issues*

not interested in engaging television.”

Thus, for network development execs and producers looking to tap into this economically desirable and TV-loyal demo, what sort of programming works? Jacobson says that just as the 50-plus audience is diverse, so too is RLTV’s programming approach, ranging from transformational shows geared towards life transitions (such as empty nesting) to more

informational themes, such as finance.

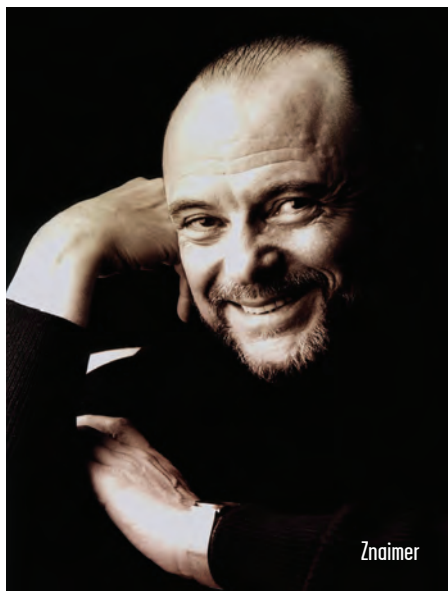
Reality and docusoaps also rate, provided they’re about relatable issues and situations (such as the intergenerational family business docsoap *Family Pickle*).

Znaimer agrees that boomers, or zoomers (“boomers with zip”), are like any other television audience and gravitate towards programming that represents them while entertaining them.

“If you want to attract a group, you put up protagonists who are like it,” he says. “You make them capable and attractive, and portray them in real-life situations instead of manufactured ones, and the audience will find you.”

If more and more viewers who hit that magic number see less and less of their interests represented on their networks of choice, they’ll likely tune out, and take their chunk of that \$1.8 trillion spending power elsewhere. Thus, Wurtzel, Znaimer, Jacobson and other alpha boomer advocates suggest that networks, media measurement companies and media buyers alike wake up to the reality of an aging, but entertainment-hungry, populace.

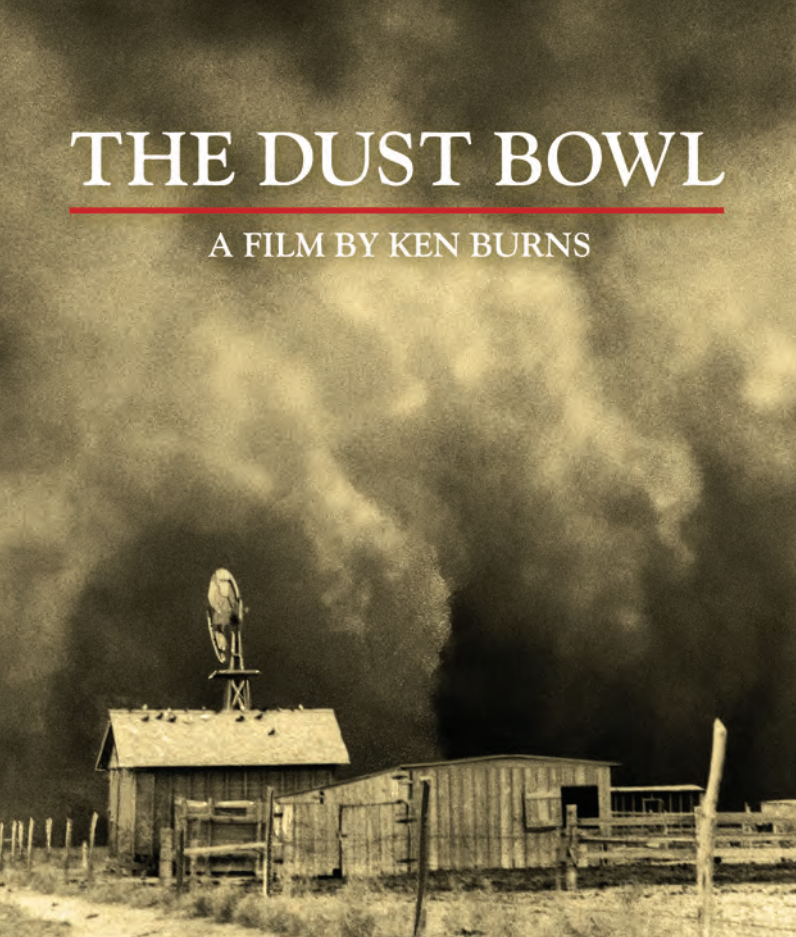
“This is the beginning of an inevitable movement which will become more apparent with every passing year,” says Znaimer, “or dare I say, every passing day.” ■



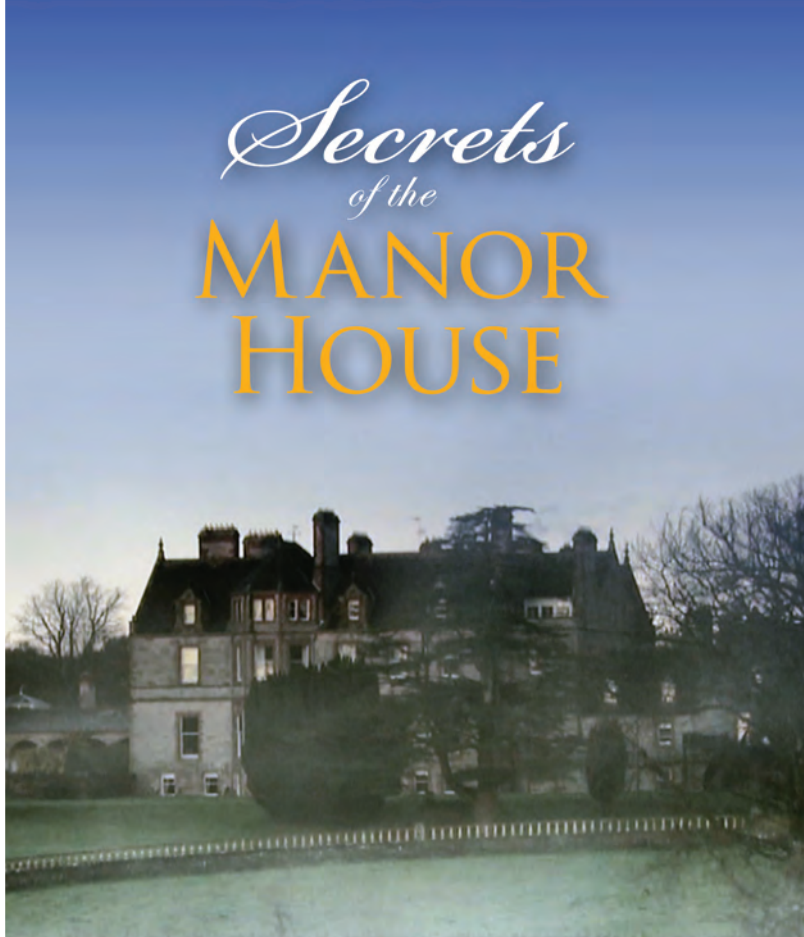
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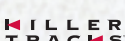
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(RE)MAKING A DIFFERENCE

With Oscar-winner *Undefeated* set for the Hollywood treatment, ro*co productions partnering with *The Help*'s producers, and Scott Rudin buying remake rights for *Indie Game* and *Brooklyn Castle*, the fiction realm is increasingly turning to docs for inspiration.

BY ADAM BENZINE

In Hollywood, are documentaries the new books?

It certainly seems to be the case, given the activity of the past few months. While West Coast studios have had a long tradition of acquiring the rights to remake books as blockbusters, documentaries have recently come to the fore as the new hot choice for real life-inspired screenplays.

At Sundance in January, the two big stories emerging from the Utah festival both concerned doc remakes.

First came the announcement that U.S. pay-TV net HBO and Scott Rudin Productions had acquired the rights to remake Lisanne Pajot and James Swirsky's *Indie Game: The Movie*, a crowdfunded doc about video game developers, as a fictional TV drama – the

second successive year the net has acquired fiction rights for a doc, after optioning Ian Palmer's *Knuckle* in 2011.

Then came the news that 1492 Pictures, the prodco behind box office hits such as *The Help* and three films in the *Harry Potter* series, would be teaming up with ro*co productions for a pipeline partnership that would see documentaries adapted into features, starting with Yoav Potash's *Crime After Crime*.

A few weeks after the festival, remakes hit the headlines once again, when The Weinstein Company announced that musician Sean "Diddy" Combs had signed on as an exec producer for Dan Lindsay and T.J. Martin's *Undefeated*, which looks at underprivileged student athletes from an inner-city Memphis school, and the volunteer coach who steers

them through a football season.

As part of the deal, Combs will work on a scripted remake of the doc, which has gained a huge publicity boost after its recent Academy Award win for best documentary feature.

Finally, as *realscreen* neared press time in March, director Katie Dellamaggiore unveiled details of a deal for her doc *Brooklyn Castle* at SXSW in Austin, Texas, with Sony Pictures and Scott Rudin Productions signing on to buy up the film's remake rights.

Of course, documentary remakes have occasionally happened in the past – Werner Herzog remade his 1997 doc *Little Dieter Needs to Fly* as the 2007 movie *Rescue Dawn*, while actor Drew Barrymore won a Golden Globe for her role in HBO's 2009 remake of David and Albert Maysles' 1975 classic *Grey Gardens*.

Sean "Diddy" Combs is exec producing a scripted remake of this year's Oscar-winning doc *Undefeated* (pictured)



Zipper



Curry



Barnathan



Sinclair



Turley



A remake deal was signed for Lisanne Pajot and James Swirsky's *Indie Game: The Movie* after the doc premiered at Sundance in January

But the recent and sudden charge to buy up doc rights is remarkable. And while non-fiction makers are themselves not above turning to other mediums for adaptations (see *realscreen's* interview with Margaret Atwood on page 70), what is it that's driving this West Coast gold rush?

"There's nothing like a true story," offers 1492 Pictures president Michael Barnathan. "There are so many interesting documentaries that get made and either don't get seen or don't get into the right hands in terms of movie people. And something like *Undeclared* or *Crime After Crime* is fantastic because it's got a whole arc to the story, which makes everybody's life easier. You have a surer sense of what it is than if it were just a kernel of an idea.

"The other nice thing is that often years of research go into these," he adds. "Working with a documentarian, as we are with Yoav, if they've been getting inside the story, living with it for six years or so and looking for those dramatic turns, then they know it very intimately."

Prior to the ro*co deal, Barnathan had thought about the idea of turning a documentary into a movie, having optioned Thurston Clarke's book *The Last Campaign: Robert F. Kennedy and 82 Days that Inspired America* after being impressed by PBS's 'American Experience' doc *RFK*.

"Certainly the documentary about Robert Kennedy kicked off our interest in doing a movie, and we subsequently optioned a book and have developed a screenplay. It just knocked me out, mostly because there was so much about Robert Kennedy that I

didn't know, or that I thought I knew but I didn't."

Ro*co productions president Sue Turley said her team got to know Barnathan and 1492 founder Chris Columbus when the two parties were initially looking at making *The Help* as a doc, before the project changed direction into a Hollywood feature.

After presenting 1492 with a slate of five docs that she thought could be adapted, the two companies chose *Crime After Crime* to be the first project, and will aim to develop two or three docs a year as remakes.

"Having been on the set with *The Help* and seen how beautifully they were adapting something from a book into a feature, I thought this could be perfect for them," says Turley. "But I just sat with it for a while because I didn't have any idea whether they would be interested in something like this.

"But once I got the call from Yoav that he got into Sundance and we saw the final cut, and then the success happened with *The Help*, I thought I should talk to them about *Crime After Crime*," she adds. "I thought it was very similar in tone and texture to what they did with *The Help*."

Elsewhere, Nigel Sinclair, the co-founder of *Undeclared* prodco Spitfire Pictures and co-chairman and CEO of Spitfire's parent company Exclusive Media Group, says the reason The Weinstein Company took an interest in picking up the doc at SXSW in 2011 was the film's immediately apparent "little engine that could" qualities.

"We're working with the Weinstein team and are very much in the process of finding the correct writer and the correct creative team," Sinclair says, adding

that he is “sure that the motion picture version will come to the screen.”

The key thing with any remake, he adds, is “the raw material – whether it’s a book, a documentary, or an article. Anything that’s a great story – that’s what people are looking for, both filmmakers as well as the audience.

“Anything that has the kernel of a great story and great relationships – and this film obviously has both of those in spades – becomes the basis, potentially, for a great movie.”

Undefeated producer Glen Zipper, who serves as Exclusive Media’s head of documentary features, adds that “everyone involved wants to bring something fresh and new to the feature version of this, something that might not have come through in the documentary, to expand upon the story and make audiences want to revisit all these characters.”

With the *Indie Game* and *Knuckle* remakes, HBO is keeping tight-lipped, with a spokesperson telling *realscreen* that the network does not discuss projects that have been optioned and are still in development.

Nevertheless, *Indie Game* directors Pajot and Swirsky are effusive about the planned remake, set to be overseen by producer Scott Rudin (*Moneyball*, *The Social Network*).

“We are ecstatic about the possibilities of working with this team,” the directors said in a statement. “All you need to do is look at



Sony Pictures and Scott Rudin Productions have bought remake rights to SXSW hit *Brooklyn Castle*

Hollywood studio Dreamworks in a remake of his second film *Racing Dreams*, a doc about young NASCAR hopefuls, as a scripted feature.

Curry has signed on to exec produce and creative consult on the remake – a role that among other things will see him giving script notes – and is also shopping around the remake rights for *If a Tree Falls*.

“There are many times where we’re in the edit room and we’re thinking, ‘I wish this

just rough drafts for fiction films, which isn’t the case,” he opines. “There are moments that are magical in documentaries because they’re real, and once they’re fictionalized they lose that magic.”

Barnathan agrees. “Something like *Capturing the Friedmans*, for example, was so bizarre and strange. And the fact that it’s real and you’re watching it unfold in that way means that if you were to dramatize it, it would become less effective. So it’s definitely finding the story that could benefit from retelling in a dramatic film.”

In terms of other potential pitfalls, Curry warns that when dealing with Hollywood studios “the deals are very different from documentary deals in the way they’re structured. My best advice would be to get somebody who’s negotiated these deals beforehand and let them do it for you.”

Barnathan, meanwhile, says that – as with dealing with book adaptations – life rights can be a major issue. “But often with a book, the author or publisher has already acquired those rights. Those are the biggest issues in terms of documentaries – life rights when you need them.

“And again, if the documentary filmmaker had a good relationship with the subject, it’s helpful,” he adds. “It’s certainly the case that in *Crime After Crime* Yoav has a very good relationship [with the film’s subjects] – he has been very helpful.”

With additional files from Kevin Ritchie ■

“ Anything that has the kernel of a great story and great relationships becomes the basis for a great movie. ”

the list of HBO series titles and Scott Rudin’s IMDB [listing], and you can see why we think this is a brilliant thing. We want to see this show happen. We want to watch this show.”

Among the other directors getting in on the remakes game is New Jersey-born filmmaker Marshall Curry, who landed his second Oscar nomination this year for *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*, and is currently assisting

were a fiction movie because if it were we could tidy up this plot point or accentuate this dramatic moment,” says Curry. “But when you’re making documentaries you’re bound by what really happened, so there is definitely a place for fictionalizing documentaries.”

That said, his endorsement comes with a caveat. “Sometimes Hollywood makes the mistake of thinking that documentaries are

Making a documentary about the Kennedys is never going to be an easy task, especially for a director who is one herself. Here, Rory Kennedy talks to *realscreen* about the challenges of capturing the life of her mother, while also paying tribute to the political upheaval of the 1960s.

BY ADAM BENZINE

A family affair



Kennedy

On paper, *Ethel* was not set to be one of the highlights of this year's Sundance Film Festival.

A film by a daughter chronicling the life of her mother did not leap out of the program as a must-watch premiere, even if the mother in question was a key player in one of America's most important political families of the 20th century.

Yet *Ethel*, which looks at the life of Robert F. Kennedy's now 83-year-old widow, was the surprise festival hit – a film packed with humor, vitality and a strong sense of love and warmth, set against a backdrop of incredible political upheaval in the 1950s and '60s.

It is also the most personal effort from filmmaker Rory Kennedy, whose past credits include *The Fence* (*La Borda*), *A Boy's Life* and the Emmy-winning *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib*.

As with most of Kennedy's films, *Ethel* was fully commissioned by U.S. pay-TV net HBO, which will air the 97-minute title this autumn, after it continues its festival run at Hot Docs in Toronto.

Talking to *realscreen* in Park City, Utah, Kennedy says the film came about on the suggestion of Sheila Nevins, the president of HBO Documentary Films.

"Sheila's approached me on other occasions to do films about my family and I've always resisted, mostly for personal reasons," Kennedy explains. "But when she talked about doing a film on my mother, I had really assumed that she [Ethel] wouldn't want to do it.

"My mother is somebody who hasn't really done any interviews in the last 30 years and is not comfortable talking about herself, but she said that she would do it, and I knew she was

doing it because she thought that it was the right thing to do. And I felt along with her that it was something that I should do, although I also knew that it was going to be challenging."

Kennedy interviewed her mother and seven of her siblings over the course of five days, and these conversations – combined with a wealth of interesting archive footage – make up the film.

"Most of the archive came from the Kennedy Library," she recalls. "That was the first place we went, to look at the broad picture. They have archival material that is both from the public and from private institutions in one place.

"There was also my mother's personal collection, a lot of which is also housed at the Kennedy Library but is in a different section and hasn't been archived. So part of the process was going through that material and

finding some gems along the way.”

Kennedy and her team also managed to track down home video footage from her mother’s side of the family – the Skakels – although “it took quite a while to get there,” she says.

“We had found VHS tapes of a lot of Skakel home movies, but it was very hard to find out where the original footage was,” Kennedy says. “There was a lot of stuff in storage, particularly photographs – there were 16,000 images that we went through and archived, many of which we used in the film and have never been seen before.”

Despite a humor-filled first third and a historically fascinating second act, it is abundant sadness that fills the final third of the doc.

The Kennedys have seen loss on a scale uncommon in American politics. Ethel lost first her brother-in-law and then her husband to assassins’ bullets within a space of five years, and has lived through the untimely deaths of her parents and two of her 11 children.

Rory, meanwhile, lost her cousin John Jr. when his plane crashed en route to her wedding, killing him, his wife and his sister-in-law.

“There’s a lot that’s happened that’s deeply and profoundly sad, so it was hard to ask family members to revisit those things,” Kennedy reflects. “People in my family very much live in the present and go through the world looking forward, so to ask them to look back was not comfortable. It’s not like it was a



Ethel Kennedy laughs as husband Robert “roughhouses” with the kids (Paul Schutzer/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

between telling her mother’s story and her father’s, given that so much of Ethel’s life has been devoted to her husband.

It could be suggested, given the prominence of RFK in the film’s second act, that *Ethel and Bobby* might be a more suitable title for the film. Nevertheless, Kennedy insists this is very

times together,” says Kennedy.

“But his profile is more public and known, and part of her story is the support that she provided that enabled him to go out in the world and be the person that he was, and her role in that.

“If I was making *Ethel and Bobby*, it would be a very different film. It’s not *Ethel and Bobby*, because there would be a myriad number of choices that would be different if it was an equal focus on both of them.

“The reality is you’re taking an 83-year-old person who has had a very full life, and reducing it down to 100 minutes,” she adds. “But I feel like I gave it everything I could and I don’t feel like there’s anything on the [cutting room] floor that I feel regretful about.”

Looking to the future, Kennedy plans to take a short break from directing while *Ethel* continues its festival run, to focus her attention on her other “lovely ongoing project” – being a mother.

“I have three young kids,” she says, “so I’m going to spend some time with them, and maybe start to develop something in the fall.” ■

“I’m not a tell-all sort of person, so it’s not entirely in my comfort zone to go into personal things.”

bad thing, it was just not comfortable.”

She adds that there was “an added anxiety in making this film for me because I’m not particularly... I’m not a tell-all sort of person, so it’s not entirely within my comfort zone to go into personal things.”

Also challenging was finding the balance

much a film about her mother, despite the ever-looming presence of her father.

“Part of the story of my mother – a huge part of her story – is her relationship with my father, and I really think they were a team going through these sometimes difficult, sometimes challenging, and often exciting

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THE GLOBAL 100

It's that time of year once again – time to salute the 100 top non-fiction production companies operating today, as chosen by *realscreen* readers. We solicited your input via *realscreen.com* and our daily newsletter and received scores of nominations from international network execs, producers and distributors. Some nominations detailed the efforts of particular companies that have

shown their worth as trusted partners, while others itemized particular series or feature docs that stood out for them in 2011. We also asked those making nominations to submit their choices for prodcos operating in various non-fiction disciplines in an effort to include specialist producers that excel in their fields.

This time around, you'll certainly see the familiar – prodcos that are no strangers to the

Global 100 thanks to the consistent quality of their work, year after year. You'll also see some first-time additions to the list, which we have identified with an asterisk (*). In both cases, these are companies that have proven themselves to be creative, trustworthy and inspiring producers to those who matter most – their colleagues in the industry, and viewers around the world.

Barry Walsh, Editor

CANADA



CINEFLIX PRODUCTIONS

Toronto | www.cineflixproductions.com

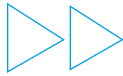
In the last year alone, Cineflix Productions has seen its output increase to 400 hours, expanded its UK production office with the appointment of Camilla Lewis as MD, and opened a Los Angeles office, headed up by Lisa Levenson. Last year also saw the beginnings of Cineflix's first scripted project, *Copper*, a coproduction with BBC America and Shaw Media. Meanwhile, *American Pickers* (pictured) continues to perform strongly for History, and Cineflix is currently at work on a third season of its Great White North version, *Canadian Pickers*, for History Television Canada. Other staple series received multiple season orders this year, including Bio's *William Shatner's Weird or What?*, Food Network Canada's *Dinner Party Wars*, W Network Canada and HGTV U.S.'s *Cash & Cari*, and *Property Brothers*, which currently rates as one of HGTV U.S.'s top 10 shows. **Kelly Anderson**

Employees: 800-plus | Hours in 2011: 400

Current/recent titles: *American Pickers*, *Canadian Pickers*, *Property Brothers*, *William Shatner's Weird or What?*, *Nothing Personal*

Upcoming: *Food Factory*, *Teen Weddings*, *Property Brothers* season three

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
Anaid Productions	<i>X-Weighted: Families</i>	Edmonton	www.anaid.com
Clearwater Documentary*	<i>Code Breakers</i>	Edmonton	www.clearwatermedia.com
Force Four Entertainment	<i>Cupcake Girls</i> , <i>Urban/Suburban</i>	Vancouver	www.forcefour.com
Frantic Films	<i>Pitchin' In</i> , <i>'Til Debt Do Us Part</i>	Winnipeg	www.franticfilms.com
Handel Productions*	<i>Earth: The Making of a Planet</i> (with Pioneer Productions)	Montreal	www.handelproductions.ca
Insight Productions	<i>Battle of the Blades</i> , <i>Canada Sings</i>	Toronto	www.insighttv.com
National Film Board of Canada	<i>Highrise</i> , <i>Life with Murder</i> (with JS Kastner Productions)	Montreal	www.nfb.ca
Omni Film	<i>Ice Pilots NWT</i>	Vancouver	www.omnifilm.com
Paperny Films	<i>Eat St.</i> , <i>Love Shines</i>	Vancouver	www.papernyfilms.com
Pixcom*	<i>License to Drill</i> , <i>Trashopolis</i>	Montreal	www.pixcom.com
Proper Television	<i>Come Dine With Me</i> (Canada), <i>Prank Science</i>	Toronto	www.proper television.com
Yap Films*	<i>March of the Dinosaurs</i> (with Wide-Eyed Entertainment)	Toronto	www.yapfilms.com



CREAM PRODUCTIONS

Toronto | www.creamproductions.ca

Known for its work in the history, technology and science genres, with titles such as *Breathing Fire: Battle of the Somme* and *U-864: Hitler's Last Deadly Secret* as prime examples, Cream expanded into docusoap and reality last year. The prodco launched *Sibling Rivalry*, a design and lifestyle series for the W Network in Canada, and is prepping the upcoming design series *Esther Extraordinaire* for HGTV Canada.

"We're proud of our continued ability to retain rights in what is a fairly tough market when it comes to IP," says co-founder Dave Brady of Cream's success, while of its move into docusoaps, co-founder Christopher Rowley says, "We are producing five such series for both Canadian and U.S. broadcasters, with several more in the pipeline." **KA**

Employees: 22 full-time | **Hours:** 53.5 hours

Current: *Canada's Greatest Know-It-All* (Cream/Boxing Cats coproduction), *Sibling Rivalry*, *Breathing Fire: Battle of the Somme*, *House of Bats*

Upcoming: *Paranormal Witness* season two, *Wild Things with Dominic Monaghan* (pictured), *Treasure Trader*, and *Esther Extraordinaire*

UNITED KINGDOM



LIME PICTURES*

London | www.limepictures.co.uk

Building on its success in the world of scripted soaps with the long-running *Hollyoaks*, Lime Pictures has become one of the first British companies to import the 'structured reality' docusoap format to the United Kingdom. The company scored a huge reality hit with *The Only Way Is Essex* — now in its fourth season — for ITV2 and brought the *Jersey Shore* format to MTV in the UK and Ireland with *Geordie Shore*, now in its second season.

In 2012, Lime is looking to continue building its rep in the reality drama realm and is considering remakes of *The Only Way Is Essex* for the American, Australian, Finnish and German markets. Lime recently inked a deal to produce four more seasons of *Essex*, which picked up the YouTube Audience Award at this year's BAFTAs. **Kevin Ritchie**

Employees: 150-plus | **Hours:** 500-plus

Current/recent titles: *The Only Way is Essex*, *Geordie Shore*



LION TELEVISION

London | www.liontv.com

Lion TV proved its mettle once again this year, reappearing in the Global 100 yet again for 2011 (the prodco hasn't missed a year since the feature began back in 2006). As with past years, the secret to its success was the diversity of its product offering. There was presenter-led history in the form of *Bomber Boys*, which aired in February of this year and featured Ewan McGregor and brother Colin in another Lion-produced special for the BBC following 2010's *The Battle of Britain*; and *The Spice Trail*, again for the BBC and featuring Brit TV presenter Kate Humble. But there was also fun-filled factual entertainment, as seen in such series as *Scream If You Know the Answer!* (which also aired in the U.S. on Travel Channel via Lion U.S.) and the enduring *Cash Cab* franchise.

In the year ahead, look for *Wartime Farm*, an extension of the *Victorian Farm/Victorian Pharmacy* (pictured) conceit, in which hardy individuals tend farms using the technology and tools of various historical eras. **Barry Walsh**

Employees: Between 120-150 | **Hours:** 250

Current/recent titles: *Bomber Boys*, *Horrible Histories*, *The Spice Trail*, *15 Kids & Counting*

Upcoming: *Wartime Farm*, *Venice 24/7*, *World Series of Dating*

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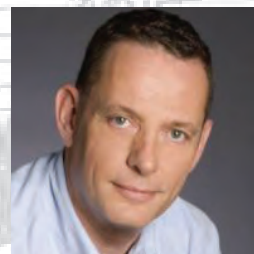
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TIGRESS

Bristol | www.tigressproductions.co.uk

"C4 to stream dead hippo feast" is not an everyday headline here at *realscreen* but it could be if Bristol's Tigress Productions continues producing innovative programs such as *Hippo: Nature's Wild Feast Live*, an interactive wildlife special during which viewers tuned in to UK pubcaster Channel 4's website and watched as hyenas and crocodiles devoured a decomposing hippo carcass located in Zambia.

The Endemol-owned company also completed its first 3D production, a natural history program shot in Namibia called *Beautiful Freaks*. Two years in the making, the hour-long program focused on "weird" animals living in the African desert and is part of the company's ongoing mandate to push the boundaries of new technology. Also in 2011, Tigress hired Steve Rankin (*Man vs. Wild*) as a development exec. **KR**

Employees: 9 | **Hours:** 32

Current/recent titles: *Hippo: Nature's Wild Feast; Live Like an Animal*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
Atlantic Productions	<i>The Bachelor King 3D</i>	London	www.atlanticproductions.co.uk
Blink Films*	<i>Mummifying Alan: Egypt's Last Secret</i>	London	www.blinkfilmsuk.com
Darlow Smithson (an Endemol company)	<i>How Hard Can It Be?</i>	London	www.darlowsmithson.com
Dragonfly Prods. (a Shine Group company)	<i>One Born Every Minute, Bear's Wild Weekend</i>	London	www.dragonflytv
Firecracker Films	<i>Big Fat Gypsy Weddings</i>	London	www.firecrackerfilms.com

040

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TWOFOUR BROADCAST

London, Plymouth | www.twofour.co.uk

Twofour scored high-profile ratings hits with the ob doc series *Educating Essex* (pictured) for Channel 4, the new format *Alex Polizzi — The Fixer* for BBC2, and the factual offering *Cornwall with Caroline Quentin* for ITV1. The company also produced Channel 4's product placement program *New Look Style the Nation*, a live studio entertainment show that enabled viewers at home to design outfits that would appear on screen during the show. Twofour bolstered its exec team with the appointment of ex-Channel 4 commissioner Tamara Abood as head of factual, while *Educating Essex* director David Clews joined as head of docs and Martin Trickey joined as digital creative director to work on cross-platform projects. **KR**

Employees: 122 | **Hours:** 100-plus

Current/recent titles: *Educating Essex*, *Choccywoccydoodah*

Upcoming: *Be Your Own Boss*, *The Exclusives*



WALL TO WALL (PART OF THE SHED MEDIA GROUP)

London | www.walltowall.co.uk

Global 100 veterans Wall to Wall cornered the genealogy genre in 2011 with ITV's *Long Lost Family* and the eighth season of celebrity family tree show *Who Do You Think You Are?* (pictured). Returning factual series included BBC hit *Turn Back Time* and the second season of *Drugs, Inc.* for National Geographic. In 2012, the company is moving into the singing competition realm with a British version of *The Voice* for the BBC. Entertainment formats will be a big focus of the year ahead. New hires in 2011 included former BBC editor of format entertainment Moira Ross, who took on the newly created role of head of entertainment. **KR**

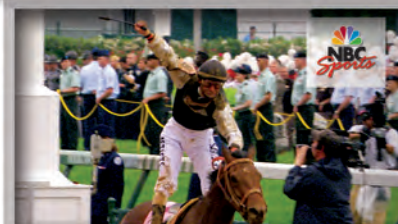
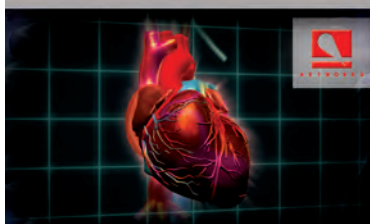
Employees: 50 | **Hours:** 130

Current/recent titles: *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *Long Lost Family*

Upcoming: *The Voice UK*

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WINDFALL FILMS

London | www.windfallfilms.com

History and science-centric prodco Windfall continued to specialize in gloriously elaborate engineering feats. Its engineering-centric slate included the third season of *Big, Bigger, Biggest*, and the fifth of *Monster Moves*, both for National Geographic. On the natural history side, Windfall will build on the success of *Inside Nature's Giants* (Channel 4/PBS) with an ambitious multi-platform natural history event and several "hands-on" history projects. Other gems from last year include the two-hour doc *The Return of the Dambusters* (pictured), a copro with Omni Film about a 1943 bombing raid on Germany, and the heartstring tugger *Alex: A Life Fast Forward*, about a 21-year-old terminal cancer patient who falls in love. **KR**

Employees: 20 | **Hours:** 35

Current/recent titles: *Alex: A Life Fast Forward*, *Dambusters*, *Inside Nature's Giants*

Upcoming: *Massive Moves*, *Escape from Colditz*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
FremantleMedia (an RTL Group company)	<i>Got Talent</i>	London	www.fremantlemedia.com
The Garden*	<i>24 Hours in A&E</i>	London	www.thegardenproductions.tv
Icon Films	<i>River Monsters</i>	Bristol	www.iconfilms.co.uk
Impossible Pictures	<i>The Last War Heroes</i>	London	www.impossiblepictures.co.uk
KEO films	<i>Terry Pratchett: Choosing to Die</i>	London	www.keofilms.com
Love Productions	<i>Great British Bake Off</i>	London	www.loveproductions.com
Minnow Films*	<i>Scenes from a Teenage Killing</i>	London	www.minnowfilms.co.uk
Nutopia	<i>Targeting Bin Laden, Rogue Sharks</i>	London	www.nutopia.com
Optomen	<i>Mary Queen of Frocks, Skin Deep: The Business of Beauty</i>	London	www.optomen.com
Oxford Scientific Films	<i>Fatal Attractions, Meerkats 3D</i>	London	www.oxfordscientificfilms.tv
Parthenon Entertainment	<i>Mystery Files</i>	London	www.parthenonentertainment.com
Pioneer Productions	<i>Curiosity: Japan Tsunami: How It Happened</i>	London	www.pioneertv.com
Raw TV	<i>Gold Rush Alaska</i>	London	www.rawtelevision.com
RDF Television (a Zodiak Media Group company)	<i>Secret Millionaire</i>	London	www.rdftelevision.com
Renegade Pictures	<i>Concrete Jungle, Don't Tell the Bride</i>	London	www.renegadepictures.co.uk
Shine TV (A News Corp company)	<i>MasterChef</i>	London	www.shine.tv
Studio Lambert	<i>Undercover Boss</i>	London	www.studiolambert.com
Talkback Thames (A FremantleMedia company)	<i>Four Rooms</i>	London	www.talkbackthames.com
True Vision*	<i>Poor Kids</i>	London	www.truevisiontv.com
Twenty Twenty (a Shed Media company)	<i>The Choir: Military Wives</i>	London	www.twentytwenty.tv
Wide-Eyed Entertainment*	<i>March of the Dinosaurs</i> (with Yap Films), <i>Redemption Inc.</i>	London	www.wide-eyedentertainment.co.uk
Zig Zag	<i>Freddie Flintoff Versus the World, Transgender Kids</i>	London	www.zigzak.uk.com

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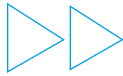
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UNITED STATES



COLLINS AVENUE (A CONTENT MEDIA CORP COMPANY)*

Los Angeles | www.collinsave.com

With *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance* owning the dance competition genre, Collins Avenue took a different approach to hitting the dance floor, creating a franchise focusing on the moms behind precocious dancers with the docuseries *Dance Moms* for Lifetime. Since then, the series has spawned a second season, a Miami-based version (pictured), and a figure skating iteration (*Ice Moms*), all for Lifetime.

"Last year we sold two shows from sizzle reels straight to series," says Collins head Jeff Collins. "*Dance Moms* became an instant hit and changed the profile of our company in a meaningful way. Although we're not really a little 'boutique' shop anymore, we still operate like one because we're not over-burdened by layers of corporate red tape. At the end of the day, it's my name on the door and my business partners trust me to make my own decisions." **KA**

Employees: Fluctuates between 100-300 | **Hours:** 100

Recent titles: *Dance Moms*, *Dance Moms Miami*, *Outrageous Kids Parties*, *Fly Girls*, *Ice Moms*

Upcoming: *Tunnel Men*, *Hockey Parents*, *Football Parents*, *American Car Haulers*



GURNEY PRODUCTIONS*

Los Angeles | www.gurneyproductions.com

If you're an American guy with a pulse, you've likely been hooked by Gurney Productions' series *Auction Hunters* (Spike TV's biggest hit on its air), *American Guns* (pictured) for Discovery and *Haunted Collector* for Syfy. Established in 2005 by Deirdre and Scott Gurney, the prodco also produces assorted Discovery Channel specials that run during 'Shark Week.' Gurney is continuing to grow with seven series and various specials currently in production.

"We have built our business around three basic principles — being positive, being solution-minded, and forward thinking," says Scott Gurney. "We empower our employees and allow them to think outside the box." **KA**

Employees: 150-200 | **Hours:** 90

Current/recent titles: *Auction Hunters*, *American Guns*, *Haunted Collector*, *Ragin' Cajuns*

Upcoming: *Duck Dynasty*, *Monster Man*, *American Digger*, *Luggage Wars*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
3 Ball Productions (an Eyeworks company)	<i>The Biggest Loser</i> ; <i>Extreme Makeover: Weight Loss Edition</i>	Manhattan Beach	www.3ballproductions.com
495 Productions	<i>Jersey Shore</i> , <i>Repo Games</i>	Burbank	www.495productions.com
Asylum Entertainment*	<i>Four of a Kind</i>	Sherman Oaks	www.asylument.com
Atlas Media Corp.	<i>Dr. G Medical Examiner</i> , <i>Big Sexy</i>	New York City	www.atlasmediacorp.com
Authentic Entertainment (an Endemol company)	<i>The Best Thing I Ever Ate</i> , <i>Flipping Out</i>	Burbank	www.authenticstv.com
Base Productions (a Tinopolis company)	<i>Police POV</i> , <i>Sport Science</i>	Los Angeles	www.baseproductions.com
Big Fish Productions*	<i>DC Cupcakes</i> , <i>Bomb Patrol Afghanistan</i>	Bethesda	www.bigfishusa.com
Bunim/Murray Productions (a Banijay company)	<i>The Real World</i> , <i>Project Runway</i>	Los Angeles	www.bunim-murray.com
Embassy Row* (A Sony Pictures Television company)	<i>The Glee Project</i>	New York City	www.embassyrow.com
Evolution Media	<i>The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills</i>	Burbank	www.evolutionusa.com
Figure 8 Films	<i>Sister Wives</i>	Carroboro, NC	www.figure8films.tv



HALF YARD PRODUCTIONS

Bethesda, New York | www.halfyardproductions.com

Abby Greensfelder and partner Sean Gallagher left their network jobs in 2006 to strike out on their own, and have since nurtured an enduring franchise in the form of TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress* (pictured). Half Yard has also made a splash on Animal Planet with the debut of *Hillbilly Handfishin'*, the series that introduced the world to the art of catching catfish, also known as noodling.

As for a secret to the company's success, Greensfelder and Gallagher say: "The Half Yard Productions team seeks out ordinary people who are doing extraordinary things and chronicles their lives, business, families or passions in a way that viewers can relate to. Whether it's noodling, digging, preparing for the end days or getting married, every story is a very personal and emotional journey." **KA**

Employees: 150 | **Hours:** 100

Current/recent titles: *Say Yes to the Dress*, *Randy to the Rescue*, *Doomsday Bunkers*, *Diggers*, *Modern Marvels*, *Hillbilly Handfishin'*, *Gun It*, *Jersey Couture*

Upcoming: Yet-to-be-announced pilots for Spike, TLC, Bravo and History



MAGILLA ENTERTAINMENT*

New York | www.magilla.tv

Magilla brewed up a hit by looking into the illicit — and illegal — underground liquor industry in America with Discovery Channel's *Moonshiners* (pictured), and also found success with taking the "hunting" out of the paranormal genre and giving it a new face from Long Island in the form of medium Theresa Caputo, aka TLC's *Long Island Medium*. That series pulled in an average of 1.3 million P2+ viewers, and *Bayou Billionaires* on CMT emerged as one of the network's highest-rated series. Magilla principals Brian Flanagan, Matthew Ostrom and Laura Palumbo Johnson obviously have a knack for finding great characters within interesting worlds, as all three series are heading into second seasons.

"We are just getting started and take pride in surrounding ourselves with extremely talented people. TV is a team sport and we look forward to new collaborations and continued success," says Flanagan. **KA**

Employees: 75 | **Hours:** 35

Current/recent titles: *Moonshiners*, *Long Island Medium*, *Bayou Billionaires*

Upcoming: *Bayou Billionaires* two, *Long Island Medium* two, *Celebrities At Home with Nancy O'Dell*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
Flight 33 Productions	<i>History of the World in Two Hours</i>	Sherman Oaks	www.flight33.tv
Florentine Films	<i>Prohibition</i>	Walpole, NH	www.florentinefilms.com
Gay Rosenthal Productions	<i>Little People, Big World</i>	Los Angeles	No website
GRB Entertainment	<i>Intervention</i>	Sherman Oaks	www.grbtv.com
High Noon Entertainment	<i>Cake Boss</i> , <i>Disaster House</i>	Denver, LA	www.highnoonentertainment.com
Hybrid Films	<i>Dog The Bounty Hunter</i> , <i>Parking Wars</i>	New York City	www.hybridfilms.tv
Intuitive Entertainment*	<i>Pit Boss</i> , <i>Millionaire Matchmaker</i>	Los Angeles	www.intuitivelc.com
Karga Seven*	<i>Spy Wars</i>	Santa Monica	www.karga7.com
Kartemquin Films	<i>The Interrupters</i>	Chicago	www.kartemquin.com
Left/Right	<i>Mob Wives</i> , <i>Russian Dolls</i>	New York City	www.leftright.tv
Leftfield Pictures	<i>Pawn Stars</i> , <i>American Restoration</i>	New York City	www.leftfieldpictures.com
Magical Elves	<i>Top Chef</i> , <i>Braxton Family Values</i>	Los Angeles	www.magicalelves.com
Mark Burnett Productions	<i>Survivor</i> , <i>The Voice</i>	Beverly Hills	No website
Megalomedia*	<i>Shipping Wars</i> , <i>Heavy</i>	Austin, TX	www.megalomedia.com



PILGRIM STUDIOS

North Hollywood | www.pilgrimstudios.com

Headed up by CEO Craig Pilgion, the prodco formerly known as Pilgrim Films & Television has seemingly gone from strength to strength, with established series such as *Top Shot* for History and *American Chopper: Junior vs. Senior* for Discovery pulling in great numbers. A high point for the latter series came in the form of a live "build off" special (pictured) which nabbed 4.8 million total viewers. Another Pilgrim franchise, *The Ultimate Fighter*, moved from Spike after 14 seasons to Fox's FX, and premiered in March. Series making their debuts later in 2011 included *Big Shrimpin'* for History and docusoap *Welcome to Sweetie Pie's* for Oprah Winfrey Network, with the latter already renewed for a second season. Pilgrim also made a move into scripted via the Lifetime project *Amanda Knox: Murder on Trail in Italy*. So far in 2012, Pilgrim is adding to its testosterone-friendly fare with such series as *Full Metal Jousting* for History and a fishing foray for National Geographic Channel, the upcoming *Wicked Tuna*. **BW**

Employees: 600-plus | **Hours:** 300-plus

Current/recent titles: *Welcome to Sweetie Pie's*, *Ultimate Fighter*, *Top Shot*

Upcoming: *Wicked Tuna*



SCOTT FREE*

Los Angeles (U.S. office) | www.rsafilms.com/page/scottfree

While Scott Free, a sister company to Ridley Scott's commercial prodco RSA Films, has made its mark in feature films (its London office was behind the doc collaboration with YouTube, *Life in a Day*), its non-fiction TV department, overseen by Mary Lisia, made significant strides in 2011 via such projects as the Emmy-winning *Gettysburg* for History (pictured) and *Prophets of Science Fiction* for Science. The company has also shown forward thinking in the branded content sphere, via innovative projects such as *Re:Generation*, a music doc helmed by *The Tillman Story's* Amir Bar-Lev and supported by Hyundai. "Our company's ability to work so closely with RSA Films and their roster of incredible directors in the branded entertainment space has also allowed our growth into the theatrical documentary and online distribution areas," says Lisia. "We are looking to raise the bar on non-fiction programming again this year." **BW**

Employees: 50-plus (in London and LA) | **Hours:** 10

Current/recent titles: *Gettysburg*, *Prophets of Science Fiction*

Upcoming: *Killing Lincoln*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
North South Productions	<i>Say Yes to the Dress: Bridesmaids</i>	Knoxville, TN	www.northsouth.tv
Original Media (an Endemol company)	<i>Swamp People</i> , <i>NY Ink</i>	New York City	www.originalmedia.com
Original Productions (a FremantleMedia co.)	<i>Storage Wars</i> , <i>Deadliest Catch</i>	Burbank	www.originalprods.com
Part 2 Pictures*	<i>Our America with Lisa Ling</i>	Brooklyn, NY	www.part2pictures.com
Ping Pong Productions*	<i>Finding Bigfoot</i> , <i>Destination Truth</i>	Los Angeles	www.ppongproductions.com
Relativity REAL	<i>Coming Home</i> , <i>Police Women</i>	Los Angeles	www.relativitymediallc.com
Screaming Flea Productions	<i>Hoarders</i>	Seattle	www.sfpseattle.com
Sharp Entertainment*	<i>Extreme Couponing</i> , <i>Man v. Food</i>	New York City	www.sharpentertainment.com
Shed Media US (a Shed Media company)	<i>All-American Muslim</i> , <i>Bethenny Ever After</i>	Los Angeles	www.shedmediaus.com
Sirens Media	<i>Stolen Voices</i> , <i>Buried Secrets</i>	New York City	www.sirensmedia.com
A. Smith & Co. (a Tinopolis company)	<i>Kitchen Nightmares</i>	Los Angeles	www.asmithco.com
Spitfire Pictures (an Exclusive Media Group company)*	<i>Undefeated</i> , <i>George Harrison: Living in the Material World</i>	Los Angeles	www.spitfirepictures.com



WORLD OF WONDER

Hollywood | www.worldofwonder.net

World of Wonder continues to remain a favorite producer for networks looking to tap into pop culture and raise an eyebrow or two while doing so, with series such as *RuPaul's Drag Race* on Logo and *Million Dollar Listing* on Bravo several seasons deep. The company, headed up by Randy Barbato and Fenton Bailey (pictured with Chaz Bono), has also had success in the feature doc realm, with 2011's *Becoming Chaz*, a candid look at Bono's gender reassignment from female to male, premiering at Sundance, airing as part of Oprah Winfrey Network's Documentary Club, garnering an Emmy nomination and spawning a sequel (*Being Chaz*). The team also supports and promotes its projects through its blog, appropriately titled The Wow Report.

"Whether it's the crazy Bounce scene breaking out of New Orleans, two gay dads who've adopted 10 kids in Michigan, or Travis Wall's dance troupe launching in Hollywood, telling the stories of rule breakers making a difference really inspires us," says Bailey. "There really isn't a more exciting time to be working in unscripted." **BW**

Employees: Approximately 100 | Hours: 130

Current/recent titles: *Becoming Chaz*, *Being Chaz*, *RuPaul's Drag Race*, *Million Dollar Listing* | Upcoming: *All the Right Moves*

INTERNATIONAL



CORDELL JIGSAW

Woolloomooloo, Australia | www.cordelljigsaw.com

Already a giant on the Australian factual production scene, Cordell Jigsaw Productions, headed up by Michael Cordell and Nick Murray, had a banner year in 2011 with the success of its controversial social experiment series for SBS, *Go Back to Where You Came From* (see our MIPTV Picks feature). The past year also saw Cordell Jigsaw expand via two joint ventures — a specialist science prodco, Genepool, with Sonya Pemberton, and factual prodco Ronde with *Bondi Rescue*'s Ben Davies. But a bigger expansion came in the early months of this year, with the announcement that Cordell Jigsaw was merging with Andrew Denton's Zapruder's Other Films, which makes the new entity, Cordell Jigsaw Zapruder, the biggest indie prodco in Australia. This year, priority projects include a series for Australia's A&E, *MegaTruckers*, and another season of *Go Back*. **BW**

Employees: 30-40 | Hours: 40-plus

Current/recent titles: *Go Back to Where You Came From*, *MegaTruckers*, *Bondi Rescue*

Upcoming: *Great Southern Land*, *Two in the Great Divide*

COMPANY	TITLES	HEAD OFFICE	WEBSITE
Beyond Productions	<i>MythBusters</i> , <i>Taboo</i>	Sydney	www.beyond.com.au
Clarke, Costelle & Co	<i>Apocalypse: Hitler</i>	Paris	www.cccprod.com
Endemol	<i>Wipeout</i> , <i>Big Brother</i>	Amsterdam	www.endemol.com
Essential Media & Entertainment	<i>Seduction in the City</i>	Sydney	www.essential-media.com
Gruppe 5 Filmproduktion	<i>Holy War</i> , <i>Walking the Great Wall</i>	Cologne	www.gruppe5film.de
Heymann Brothers Films	<i>Life in Stills</i>	Tel Aviv	www.heymanfilms.com
NHNZ (a Fox company)	<i>I Survived: Beyond and Back</i> , <i>China Revealed</i>	Dunedin	www.nhnz.tv
Off the Fence	<i>Twins of the Twin Towers</i>	Amsterdam	new.offthefence.com

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WILDScreen FILM FESTIVAL
BRISTOL

BEST SOUND ROSCAR AWARD
WILD TALK AFRICA FILM FESTIVAL
CAPE TOWN

SILVER PALM
INTL UNDERWATER FILM FESTIVAL
MARSEILLES

BEST SCENARIO AWARD
SPECIAL JURY AWARD
ALBERT'S WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL

CINEMATOGRAPHY MERIT AWARD
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MIPTV PICKS 2012



BY BARRY WALSH

★ ★ ★ BEST IN SHOW ★ ★ ★

The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom

Filmmaker Lucy Walker (*Waste Land*) had set out to visit Japan during cherry blossom season in order to capture the Japanese people's fascination with the beautiful yet ephemeral flower. When the country was ravaged on March 11, 2011 by an earthquake and tsunami, Walker contemplated abandoning the project. Thankfully, for all of us, she didn't. The 40-minute short, nominated for an Oscar this year and the winner of Sundance's jury prize for non-fiction short film, juxtaposes the alluring yet fleeting nature of the flower with the resilience of the survivors who share their heart-wrenching tales.

Partners: Directed by Lucy Walker; distributed by Goldcrest Films International (London)

Premiered: Toronto International Film Festival, 2011

Length: 1 x 40 minutes, 1 x 52 minutes

Rights available: Worldwide

Once again, we at *realscreen* are happy to present the projects heading to this year's MIPTV market that we feel are "must sees." Clips submitted to our intrepid viewing panel ranged from hard-hitting, socially conscious doc fare to historical programming that deftly mixes archive material with vivid re-enactments; and from scintillating science and natural history, to watercooler-friendly factual entertainment. And mountains — there seemed to be a glut of projects based around mountain expeditions this year, which we can only assume is symbolic for this being a "peak" year in non-fiction content, as opposed to a "valley."

Congrats to our best in show, which receives two passes to the 2013 Realscreen Summit.

HISTORY



Mankind: The Story of All of Us

In 2010, History and Nutopia collaborated on an epic retelling of the founding and evolution of the United States, *America: The Story of Us*. The miniseries boasted cinematic recreations, state-of-the-

art CGI, and an introduction to the first episode from none other than U.S. President Barack Obama. Unsurprisingly, the program became one of the network's highest rated in its history. Now, A-E is presenting another Nutopia "megadoc" that's even more ambitious in scale. Taking on the global history of civilization, ranging from the ancient Egyptians and the building of Stonehenge to the European Dark Ages and many points between, the series takes the original's mix of CGI, re-enactment and factual insight and ups the ante.

Partners: Nutopia for History | **Airing:** Q4 2012

Volume: 12 x 60 minutes | **Rights available:** Worldwide



The Dust Bowl

For the better part of a decade, from 1930 to 1936 (and in some locations until 1940), the American Southern plains were rendered barren and void, plundered by careless farming practices and turned to dust by drought. What we came to know as

The Dust Bowl was the worst man-made ecological disaster in America to date, in which scores of children were stricken with "dust pneumonia," and farming families who had tended the land were left penniless, prompting the largest exodus in U.S. history. This mini-series from Ken Burns' Florentine Films paints a vivid picture of those dark days, while exploring deeper issues regarding our relationships to the land, and to each other.

Partners: Florentine Films, distributed by PBS International

Volume: 4 x 60 minutes | **Airing:** Fall 2012 (PBS U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide



Back Door Channels

The Middle East peace process has been marked with highs and lows throughout its history, and such volatility, sadly, shows no signs of abating. Thus, protecting what billionaire and ‘back door channel’ Leon Charney refers to as “the lost art of diplomacy” — shrouded by necessity in secret communications and liaisons — is all the more important in the WikiLeaks era. This film, featuring interviews with such integral figures as Jimmy Carter and Henry Kissinger, takes a detailed look at how diplomatic channels influenced and propelled the peace process towards the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty of 1979. While those events may be in the recent past, in the tumultuous wake of the Arab Spring, they carry remarkable resonance today.

Partners: Produced by Channel Production Films; distributed by Solid Entertainment (international), Fisher Klingenstein Films (U.S./theatrical) | **Airing:** Q1 2012 (PBS)

Length: 1 x 50 minutes, 1 x 96 minutes | **Rights available:** All broadcast rights except North America



World War II: The Last Heroes

The team that brought us the critically acclaimed Channel 4 historical series *Blitz Street* takes us back to the final years of the Allied campaign in the Second World War. With a mix of previously unseen archive materials from the Imperial War Museum and National Archives, explosive re-enactments using actual WWII firepower, and gripping first-person testimonials, *World War II: The Last Heroes* depicts the war as seen by the Allied troops, from the D-Day landing to the suicide of Hitler in Berlin.

Partners: Impossible Pictures Ltd. and Entertainment One in association with Shaw Media (Canada), Channel 4 (UK), and Yesterday for UKTV (UK); distributed by Cineflix Rights

Aired: November 2011 (Channel 4) | **Length:** 6 x 60 minutes

Rights available: All rights worldwide excluding Canada and UK



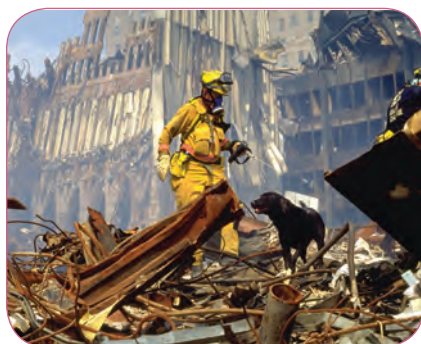
War Horse: The Real Story

Steven Spielberg's latest theatrical epic has cast the world's attention on the story of the War Horses of the First World War — equine comrades that rode with soldiers into battle. This documentary mixes archive footage with first-hand testimonials, detailing the hardships endured by the horses on the frontlines, as well as the relationships formed between the hardy animals and their masters. A million British horses were “called up” to serve in the war, taken from farms and country estates. And while a quarter of that number would die on the field from shrapnel and disease, the war horses would prove to be deciding factors in the conflict's outcome.

Partners: Testimony Films for Channel 4, distributed by TVF International (London)

Aired: March 2012 (Channel 4) | **Length:** 1 x 52 minutes

Rights available: All rights worldwide excluding UK and Ireland



Hero Dogs of 9/11

Serving as a stand-alone special and as a pilot for the upcoming series *World's Greatest Hero Dogs*, now in development at Toronto-based kelencontent, this program looks at the 300-plus dogs that were part of the rescue and recovery operations following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. The show details the danger of their mission — to go where humans couldn't, in order to find any possible survivors amongst the rubble and wreckage — through interviews with survivors and stylized archival footage, while also illuminating the strength of the bond between human beings and “man's best friend.”

Partners: Produced by kelencontent, distributed by Beyond International

Length: 1 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** Animal Planet Canada, Sky Italia

Rights available: Worldwide excluding Canada

Political, Social & Religious



Saving Face

The winner of the 2012 Academy Award for best documentary short film is a gripping exploration of a dark reality in Southeast Asia — the growing scourge of acid violence. Increasingly, the horrifying tactic of throwing acid onto women's bodies and faces is being used by men as a form of twisted retribution for spurned sexual advances or marriage proposals. The film highlights the stories of two Pakistani women who have experienced the crime and who are attempting to move forward in their lives, and the efforts of a plastic surgeon who is volunteering to help these women and others like them.

Partners: Milkhaus and Jungefilm for HBO and Channel 4, distributed by ro*co international | **Length:** 52 minutes

Aired: March (HBO U.S.), Spring 2012 (Channel 4)

Rights available: All territories except North America, UK and Pakistan (pending)



Go Back to Where You Came From

The immigration debate is being conducted in numerous countries around the globe, with some undergoing more vigorous debate than others. In Australia, it's certainly a hot button issue — thus, it was no surprise that this three-part series, in which 25 Australians with assorted views on the topic experience life as asylum seekers, generated the reception and the ratings that it did. Taking its cast onto a leaky refugee boat (from which it had to be rescued) and then to such hot spots as Congo and Iraq to see what refugee claimants are fleeing from, the program prompted so much discussion that SBS announced it would hold a televised forum on the series — its top-rated of the year — and the issue of asylum seekers. A second season will air this September.

Partners: Cordell Jigsaw Productions for SBS, distributed by SBS

Volume: 3 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** June, 2011 (SBS)

Rights: Worldwide, excluding format rights in the UK and New Zealand for series one



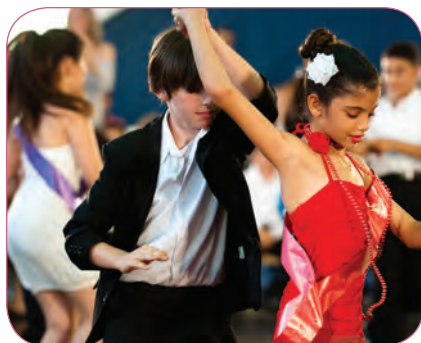
Holy Rollers

If you think that betting at blackjack and card counting at casinos is not universally regarded as “holy” behavior, odds are you’re not alone in that assessment. But the members of the Church Team, 25 blackjack players based throughout the U.S. who have used their prayerful prowess to “beat the house” and bring in approximately \$100,000 a month for their faith, might beg to differ. This film tells the story behind the team and its extra-ecumenical exploits, and examines the crises of conscience that can arise when you’re a card counting Christian.

Partners: Connell Creations, distributed by Electric Sky (Brighton)

Length: 52 minutes or 91 minutes

Rights available: Worldwide



Dancing in Jaffa

Internationally acclaimed ballroom dancer and instructor Pierre Dulaine, born in the town of Jaffa, Israel to a Palestinian mother, has accomplished much in his career, including establishing a dance instruction program, Dancing Classrooms. With that initiative, he first went to an inner city school in New York City and taught his young charges valuable life lessons through the power of dance. Since then, more than 200,000 children have taken part in the program nationally. In this film, Dulaine returns to his birthplace to bring Israeli and Palestinian children together in the same way. Morgan Spurlock has signed on as an executive producer, and the film has a first look deal with New Line Cinema for theatrical distribution in the U.S.

Partners: kNow Productions, Tiara Blu Films, Warrior Poets, distributed by Cinephil (Tel Aviv) outside of the U.S.

Length: Feature-length | **Airing:** 2012 (Keshet)

Rights available: Worldwide, excluding Israel



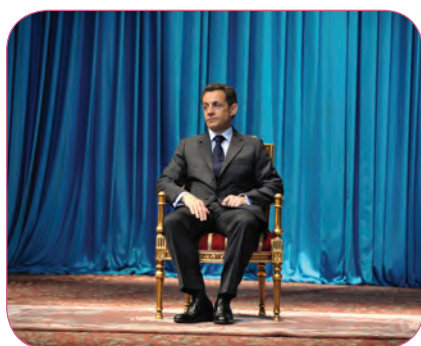
The Invisible War

The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that in 2010 alone, over 19,000 sexual assaults occurred in the military. In addition, 20% of all servicewomen have experienced some sort of sexual trauma while serving. *The Invisible War*, winner of the audience award for documentary at Sundance this past January, puts faces to such statistics, and sheds light on a system that has made it difficult or impossible for victims to seek justice.

Partners: Chain Camera Pictures, Regina Kulik Scully, Jennifer Siebel Newsom, in association with RISE Films, ITVS, Fork Films, Cuomo Cole Productions, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; distributed by ro*co international (international, U.S. educational), Cinedigm Entertainment Group and New Video (theatrical)

Premiered: Sundance, January, 2012 | **Length:** 1 x 97 minutes (theatrical), 55 minutes (TV)

Rights available: All international rights except Canadian and French TV, no rights available in the U.S.



Looking for Nicolas Sarkozy

With the presidential election in France on the way in April, international attention is fixed on the man currently holding the office. This doc from renowned French filmmaker William Karel examines the reign of Nicolas Sarkozy through the vantage points of 18 non-French, Paris-based journalists, including CBS' Lesley Stahl, the BBC's John Simpson, the *New York Times'* Thomas Friedman and Jan Fleischhauer of *Der Spiegel*. How does the rest of the world see this charismatic chameleon and ultimately, does he care?

Partners: Roche Productions and ARTE France, with RTBF, Radio Canada, VRT, YLE, NRK, SVT, ERT, Telewizja Polska, RTV Slovenija, Ceska TV and ERR; distributed by Zed (Paris)

Length: 1 x 52 minutes, 1 x 90 minutes | **Aired:** December 2011 (ARTE) | **Rights available:** Worldwide



Brother Number One

In 1978, New Zealand yacht enthusiast Kerry Hamill and two other men had anchored their yacht, the *Foxy Lady*, at Koh Tang Island to shelter from a storm. With Englishman John Dewhirst, Hamill was seized by the Khmer Rouge, tortured for two years, and then executed after signing "confessions" under duress (Canadian Stuart Glass was shot when the boat was taken). This film traces the efforts of younger brother and Olympic rowing champion Rob Hamill as he travels to Cambodia to seek justice for his brother and to better understand the conditions that led to the murderous reign of Pol Pot. His journey not only brings him face to face with the man who gave the final order for his brother's execution, but also with his own conflicted feelings of anger and the need to forgive.

Partners: BNO Productions and Pan Pacific Films; distributed by Cargo Film & Releasing

Length: 1 x 99 minutes or 1 x 56 minutes | **Airing:** 2012 (TV3/Mediaworks, NZ)

Rights available: All rights in all media excluding New Zealand



Charlotte: A Life Without Limbs

Charlotte Cleverly-Bisman is New Zealand's youngest quadruple amputee, the result of contracting meningococcal septicemia at the age of six months. Production company Greenstone TV documented her story then in the 2005 film *Baby Charlotte*. With this special, originally produced for TV3's 'Inside New Zealand,' Greenstone checks back in with Charlotte and her family, as she embarks upon new challenges, such as learning to use prosthetic limbs and traveling to the U.S. to visit Camp No Limits, a summer camp for children with limb loss. At turns inspirational and heart-rending, Charlotte's story is ultimately one of strength of spirit, as seen in her family and of course, in Charlotte herself.

Partners: Greenstone TV for TV3 and NZ On Air, distributed by Beyond Distribution

Aired: October, 2009 (TV3) | **Length:** 1 x 60 minutes

Rights available: All rights excluding Australia and New Zealand

Factual Entertainment



Recipe to Riches

Retailers are increasingly cozying up to reality competition series, as we're seeing with NBC's *Fashion Star*, and now, with this Canadian format making its way worldwide via FremantleMedia. The original series, from Toronto's Temple Street Productions, gave everyday people the chance to have their home recipes sold nationwide in one of the country's largest grocery chains, and the recipe that received the most audience votes would also earn its creator a big cash prize. FremantleMedia's director of global development, Rob Clark, calls it "the first truly interactive food show." We call it a tasty idea whose time has come.

Partners: Created by Temple Street Productions; format rights acquired by FremantleMedia

Aired: Food Network Canada, 2011 | **Rights available:** Worldwide excluding Canada, format rights



Million Dollar Neighbourhood

When the global recession of 2008 hit, factual entertainment programmers sought to create shows that would reflect the financial unease potentially afflicting audiences without depressing the hell out of them. "Aspirational" became the buzz word du jour. Here we are in 2012, and things really haven't changed all that much — the economy still sucks, and programmers are still looking for ways to depict that reality while entertaining us simultaneously. *Million Dollar Neighbourhood*, a Canadian format airing on OWN Canada, works in that it shows us real people, the townsfolk of Aldergrove, British Columbia, uniting for a common goal: to raise the collective net value of the community by \$1 million. Social experiment fact ent meets financial how-to.

Partners: Force Four Entertainment for OWN Canada, distributed by DRG

Volume: 10 x 60 minutes | **Aired:** January 2012 (OWN Canada)

Rights available: Worldwide, excluding Canada



How to Cook Like Heston

Chef Heston Blumenthal is a top draw when it comes to TV chefs in the UK, having starred in several programs for Discovery Science, the BBC and Channel 4. He also fares quite well in the real world as a chef, with his restaurant, The Fat Duck, the recipient of three Michelin stars. With this, his latest series, Blumenthal shows aspiring home cooks how to dive into preparing some of his dishes — no small task, considering his penchant for combining chemistry with cookery (also known as molecular gastronomy, a term that Blumenthal reportedly dislikes). For those of us who may be culinarily challenged but who strive to do better, you can't do much better than having this smart cookie show you how to make... a smart cookie.

Partners: Snail Porridge and Renegade Pictures for Channel 4 (UK), distributed by DRG

Volume: 6 x 30 minutes | **Aired:** January 2012 (UK)

Rights available: Worldwide, excluding the UK and Australia



Over the Top

This adventure reality format has racked up nice results in its home country of Norway on TV2. The series brings together 14 participants from various backgrounds and with different strengths and weaknesses, to compete in assorted challenges that take place in gorgeous, yet potentially dangerous, natural settings. The contestants have two things in common — a love of nature and a personal journey needing to be taken. With adventure reality staples such as *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* still proving to have legs, it looks like there's still plenty of life in the genre.

Partners: Strix Norway, distributed by Strix Television (Norway)

Volume: 11 x 45 minutes | **Airing:** TV2 Norway

Rights available: All media and worldwide rights excluding Norway

Science & Nature



Super Spider

We don't mean to creep you out here, and forgive us if you start to feel a little itchy after reading this, but in a single square metre, you could potentially find up to 200 spiders. More than 40,000 species of spiders inhabit the planet, which means these eight-legged critters probably outnumber cans of Raid by a healthy margin. But while their numbers may be great and they may look spooky, there might not be all that much to fear from the poor, misunderstood arachnid. This special uses state-of-the-art filming techniques to reveal the secret world of one of nature's most enduring and adaptable creatures.

Partners: Zed / Nova Media for ARTE, Ushuaia TV, National Geographic Channel U.S., High Fidelity, TV5 Canada; distributed by Zed (Paris)

Length: 1 x 52 minutes | **Airing:** April 2012 (ARTE) | **Rights available:** Worldwide

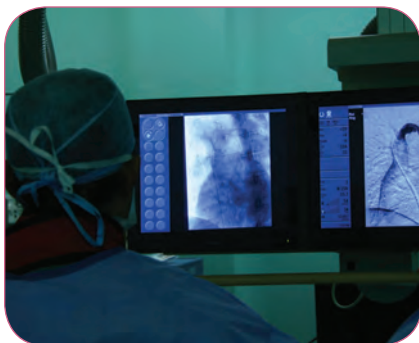


Venom Island

The Komodo and Rinca islands of Indonesia are the homes of the Komodo dragon, but the 10-foot, 285-pound beasts aren't necessarily the most fearsome inhabitants of the area. The islands are also home to the largest collection of venomous creatures on the globe. Renowned natural history specialist Earth-Touch gets up close and personal with these dangerous denizens of the wild, travelling underwater and in the deepest forests to catch them in action.

Partners: Earth-Touch and Smithsonian Networks International, distributed by Earth-Touch

Length: 1 x 50 minutes | **Airing:** Q4 2012 | **Rights available:** Worldwide, excluding U.S. and Canada



MS Wars

Originally produced for CBC science and natural history strand 'The Nature of Things,' this documentary special examines the story of Italian research scientist Paolo Zamboni's controversial treatment for multiple sclerosis, dubbed Liberation Therapy. Zamboni's treatment calls for the unblocking of jugular veins in order to combat a condition he calls chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency or CCSVI. When the research paper behind the treatment surfaced online before being published in print, it ignited a firestorm of attention from those with MS and the media alike. *MS Wars* highlights the divide between accepted procedure and the wisdom of the Web, and tells the story of some who are caught in between.

Partners: Zoot Pictures for Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, distributed by TVF International (London)

Length: 1 x 52 minutes | **Aired:** CBC's 'Nature of Things,' February 2012

Rights available: All rights worldwide, excluding Canada



Conquering the World

Over a seven-month period, rugby player-turned-mountaineer Richard Parks sought to enter the record books by climbing the highest mountains on all seven continents, and standing on all three poles — the North Pole, the South Pole, and the summit of Mount Everest — in the span of a calendar year. Following the journey step by step, from the intensive training to the danger-filled ascents of the various peaks, *Conquering the World* promises a thrilling glimpse at one man's drive to beat the elements and the odds.

Partners: Produced by Sports Media Services, distributed by Scorpion TV (London)

Length: 1 x 52 minutes and 1 x 75 minutes | **Aired:** Aired on BBC in October 2011

Rights available: Worldwide excluding the UK

Music, arts and culture



The Art of Yodeling

If this film is to be believed, then yodeling isn't just for the silver-haired set anymore. The documentary follows young philosophy student Polkabjorn (we're betting that's not his real name) and his musical accomplice "Kleine Heine" as they take their yodel-riffic act around the world, playing venues ranging from bars to stadiums. And while they may approach yodeling with a touch of hipster-friendly irony, the lads seem genuinely motivated in their pursuit to meet yodeling legend Franzl Lang. Oh, and did we mention their manager is a male stripper?

Partners: Flimmer Film (Norway), distributed by First Hand Films

Length: 1 x 58 minutes, 1 x 72 minutes | **Aired:** March 2012 (NRK) | **Rights available:** More info upon request



Usain Bolt: The Fastest

The rise of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt has been a slow and steady progression, beginning with his first high school championship medal in 2001, through to his 200 metre win at the World Junior Championships the following year, to his professional career. Now the Olympic record and world record holder for the 100 metre, and a three-time Olympic gold medalist, Bolt will have the eyes of the world on him yet again when he tries to retain his position as "The Fastest" during the London 2012 Olympics. This documentary, the first part of a two-part special, provides a close look at Bolt through interviews with those closest to him, including friends, family and his first coach, and exclusive access to the man himself.

Partners: Elephant Doc for France 2, distributed by Zodiak Rights (London)

Airing: 2012 (BBC One, France 2) | **Length:** 1 x 60 minutes | **Rights available:** Worldwide excluding France



Mongolian Bling

Hip hop in the Western world has, over the course of its history, evolved from its early status as the music and poetry of the street to its current position, nestled squarely within the mainstream. But in other global cultures, its marriage of rhythm and rhyme remains challenging to the status quo and still carries a whiff of revolution. Here, viewers are introduced to Mongolia's burgeoning hip hop scene, from the young upstarts who are moving the country's music and politics forward, to traditional musicians who have incorporated elements of hip hop into their own efforts.

Partners: Flying Fish Films for ABC 1, distributed by ABC Commercial (Sydney)

Airing: ABC 1, date TBD | **Length:** 1 x 56 minutes, 1 x 89 minutes

Rights available: Worldwide



The Human Tower

This doc follows three teams from various countries around the world as they indulge in a time-honored tradition: creating "human towers" by climbing on top of each other. Hailing from Mumbai, India; Villafranca, Spain; and Santiago, Chile, the teams each show incredible amounts of drive and dedication to the endeavor, and viewers will be mesmerized by the efforts undertaken by hundreds of people to reach for the sky — efforts that can be utterly dashed by one wrong move.

Partners: Directed and produced by Ram Devineni, Cano Rojas; distributed by Goldcrest Films International (London)

Length: 1 x 52 minutes, 1 x 75 minutes | **Premiering:** 2012

Rights available: Worldwide in all formats excluding Spain, Chile and Andorra ■

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MIPTV Booth: G3-18

MANKIND THE STORY OF ALL OF US (wt) (12 x 1 hour)

This series tells the epic tale of the global rise of civilization, complete with danger, action, heroism and adrenaline, employing groundbreaking production techniques.

DANCE MOMS (25 x 1 hour + 1 x 1 hour Special)

Explore the world of competitive dance, where mothers push their daughters to the extreme, while vicariously living out their own dreams through their children.



SHIPPING WARS (9 x 1 1/2 hour)

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TIME FOR A CHECK UP

With the trend towards healthier lifestyles continuing to accelerate, there is an increasing need for content focused on the growing health and wellness space. Here, *realscreen* talks to three North American networks about the changes they've seen in the genre and the varying degrees of difficulty in finding lifestyle programming that fits their brands.

BY KELLY ANDERSON

VERIA LIVING

As the health and wellness space becomes more mainstream in North America, with self-help books often on the bestsellers list and sightings of yoga mat-wielding city dwellers becoming ubiquitous, it's surprising that there aren't more channels in North America catering to that niche.

Some of the networks that do have been around in some incarnation for 10 years, and have weathered the drastic changes in the health and wellness genre that have occurred over the past decade.

Veria Living has been targeting this market in the U.S. since 2007, and underwent a relaunch about six months ago to freshen up the network. SVP of program sales Raymond

My Life Guru is one of Veria Living's transformational wellness series

Donahue says the net aims to increase its number of viewers significantly this year, from its current base of 15 million homes.

When it comes to a growing demand for health and wellness programming, Donahue says younger generations are driving the trend, citing a statistic that 19% of what's termed 'Generation Y' – those between the ages of 21 and 30 – have health club memberships.

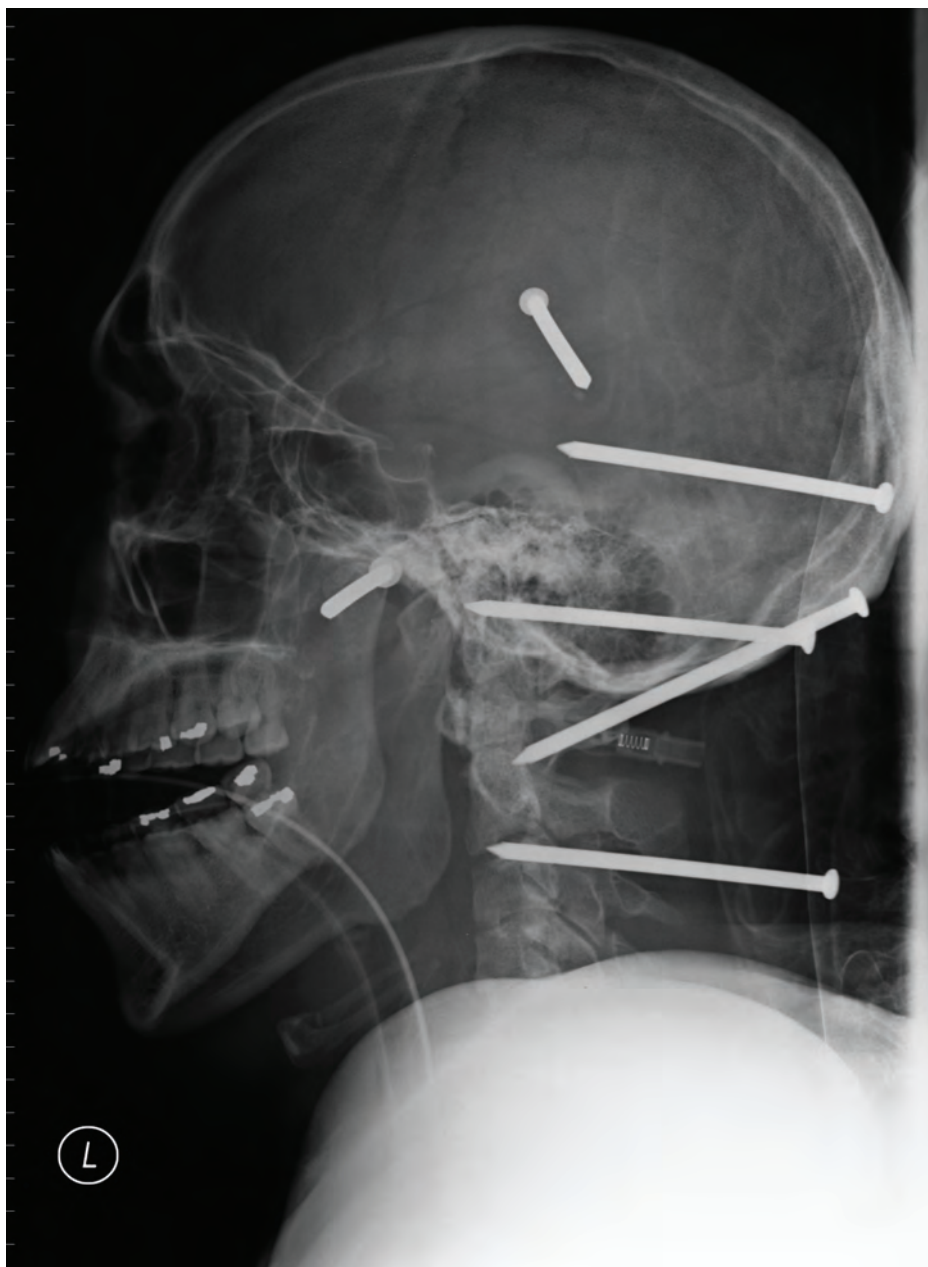
"They're into staying healthy," he says. "The younger generation is into less of the junk food and more about feeling better about themselves and I think this is part of a growing trend worldwide."

The network's offerings of natural wellness titles such as *Under the Sun* and exercise content such as *BollyFIT* attracts the 18-49

female demographic. "It's for women who have a hectic lifestyle but who want to make themselves and their families more healthy and appreciate life more," says Donahue.

He adds that the network skews female because in a family situation, women are often making important decisions regarding the health and well-being of their families. As such, Donahue says the net aims to "take you from pregnancy to birth" and beyond.

But he emphasizes that the point of the programming is not to be preachy. "Traditionally people think of wellness as stodgy informational programming, how to get from point A to B," he says. "Although the network has something to say – how to make your life healthier and how to do it through



British import *Bizarre ER* brings male viewers to Discovery Fit & Health

natural health and a healthy lifestyle – all of our programs are entertainment-based.”

Currently the network is building up a morning daypart of what it’s calling Veria Fitness, which includes programming on yoga, Pilates and anything to do with fitness and health. In the afternoons, there are blocks of healthy cooking programming.

The network applies its health and wellness mandate to various lifestyle genres such as

travel, cooking and gardening. For example, *Under the Sun* takes viewers around the globe to feature farms, restaurants and resorts that use organic-based products.

Transformational programming also figures largely in Veria’s content offering. The series *Incurables* follows people who have been diagnosed by traditional doctors with chronic illnesses, who then turn to alternative medicine to cure their ailments. *My Life Guru*, airing in

the spring, sees yogi Cameron Alborzian living with people who have a mental or physical challenge, to assess their lifestyles, and suggest changes and herbal remedies.

As for supply, Veria boasts that every show on the network is 100% Veria-produced, with everything developed in-house and produced in different parts of the country. Donahue reports that Veria has more than 500 hours of original content this year and, with interest in the genre on the rise, is currently producing more than 700 for the next. Furthermore, Donahue says Veria wants its programming to be young, hip, trendy, and to tap into the pop culture aspects of the alternative living space.

DISCOVERY FIT & HEALTH

While Veria’s programming sticks very closely to an alternative healing focus and applies it to different lifestyle genres, Discovery Fit & Health opts to take a broad look at what defines health.

“It’s not about medicine, it’s about stages of life and I think it’s about mental health and sexual health,” says Rita Mullin, SVP of content strategy for the recently rebranded net. “I don’t think of us as a medical channel.”

Mullin remembers what health programming was like when the original Discovery Health was launched in 1999. “Because we had such success with plastic surgery ‘before and after’ [shows], everybody was doing plastic surgery shows,” she says. “Remember *The Swan* and *Extreme Makeover* before it was *Home Edition*? There was a period [in which] that was the flavor of the month.” she says.

Discovery Fit & Health was rebranded from Discovery FitTV in February 2011, and began with content from FitTV and Discovery Health, which was replaced by Oprah Winfrey Network in January of that year.

By the fourth quarter of 2011, when original content debuted on the network, Mullin says the titles resonated well with its audience, particularly in the pregnancy space with new series such as *Secretly Pregnant* attracting fans, as well as the former Discovery Health series *I’m Pregnant And...* The pregnancy programming, interestingly, also contributes to bringing the network’s average age of 25-54 down to 18-49.

Another success was Brit import *Bizarre E.R.*, which also brought male viewers to the fold.

“The younger generation is into less of the junk food and more about feeling better about themselves. It’s part of a growing trend worldwide.”

While Veria applies its programming mandate across multiple types of lifestyle series, Mullin says it has proven difficult for Discovery Fit & Health to do the same.

“Travel would be tricky,” she says. “There have certainly been a couple of attempts in that area, [but] I don’t know if any of them have been successful. It’s one of those areas that we did try on Health years ago and it didn’t really take off.”

Strips of cooking shows in daytime also didn’t resonate.

“One of the things we learned at Health – and it seems to be the case here as well – is that our audience wants compelling characters and a rip-roaring good story,” she says. “When we try to do stuff that is more formatted or more information-based, they turn it off.”

She adds that programs using recreations also have a place in the roster. “*Dr G: Medical Examiner* and *Untold Stories of the ER* have recreations, and it allows us to pull from a broad range of interesting stories over a period of time, rather than being in the moment.”

ONE

Body, mind, spirit and love, meanwhile, are the blocks that Canadian specialty network ONE focuses on. The Zoomer Media-owned channel, which airs a small percentage of content produced by Veria, rebranded last April with a new strand devoted to love and clearly defined programming blocks airing during the day.

VP of programming Beverley Shenken says that the rest of the network’s content comes from Canadian producers as well as various suppliers from around the globe. ONE’s programming areas include shows featuring self-help gurus, vegetarian and organic cookery, alternative healing and exercise.

The network skews more than 67% female, and its viewers’ age range is 35-plus. Shenken

says to think of the typical ONE viewer as the sort of person who makes it a point to shop in organic grocery stores, and is interested in Eastern philosophy and sustainable living.

The main challenge that Shenken finds is a lack of programming in the health and wellness space, but she says the situation has improved from when ONE launched a decade ago. Its fitness block, with series such as *Shimmy* and Chinese program *Spirit of Yoga*, draws in the most viewers and Shenken adds that programming from China and Singapore, which it reverts for English-speaking audiences, tends to be the most on-brand content for the net.

She says that it’s a necessity to shop around for just the right content fit because the network is so niche.

“It’s not easy, but the few series I find [from that market] are really directly linked to our sensibilities, thank God,” she says. “It’s not always easy to find the stuff and certainly not easy to find Canadian programming that fits the bill.”

She adds that she’s looking for non-traditional, non-Western approaches to lifestyle programming, which can be incorporated into travel, gardening, cookery, transformational, and relationship-oriented shows. In the meantime, she’s aiming to put together some production deals with other similar broadcasters and looking to Asia for more content.

“We’re trying to make it ourselves, within our limits, and we’re finding that the things we make have legs with my colleagues at similar channels,” she offers. ■



Exercise programming, such as *Shimmy*, does well for One

From January 29 to February 1, Washington DC was non-fiction central, as delegates from around the world converged on what was the biggest Realscreen Summit to date, and the first sell-out in the event's 14-year history. Thanks to Summit chair and A&E/Bio Channel president/GM Robert DeBitetto, our advisory board, and all of the delegates for making the event one for the record books. See you in 2013!



a Profiles Television executive producer Bertram van Munster during the “Golden Age of Non-Fiction” panel; **b** Chris Palmer, director of The Center for Environmental Filmmaking; **c** “So You Think You Can Pitch?” host Howie Mandel; **d** Pilgrim Studios’ head Craig Piligian (left) and National Geographic Channels U.S. CEO David Lyle (right) share a toast; **e** NBC & Universal Television alternative programming VP Brandon Riegg; **f** Nuture head Jane Root has a laugh during the “Great Original Programming Debate”; **g** Discovery & TLC EVP and group COO Edward Sabin and Discovery Communications president and CEO David Zaslav; **h** History and Lifetime Networks president and GM Nancy Dubuc; **i** A&E and Bio Channel president and GM Robert DeBitetto;



j United Talent Agency's Joe LaBracio; **k** truTV EVP and COO Marc Juris; **l** Discovery Channel production/development EVP Nancy Daniels; **m** DRTV head of docs Mette Hoffmann Meyer; **n** Leftfield Pictures head Brent Montgomery; **o** CABLEready president Gary Lico and National Geographic Channel development/production SVP Bridget Whalen Hunnicutt watch pitch clips; **p** Keynote speaker Lauren Zalaznick, chairman of NBCUniversal Entertainment & Digital Networks/Integrated Media; **q** Lifetime Networks programming EVP Robert Sharenow; **r** NHNZ development/production EVP Phil Fairclough; **s** @radical.media entertainment president Robert Friedman and Electus branded content MD Mike Duffy; **t** National Geographic Channels U.S. president Howard T. Owens; **u** PBS president & CEO Paula Kerger; **v** Original Productions CEO Thom Beers; **w** Channel 4 head of factual Ralph Lee (ALL PHOTOS BY RAOUL GHOSE)



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Riding the wave

A decade ago, Carl Hall chose to name his new production/distribution outfit Parthenon Entertainment because it “sounded established.” Now, the London-based company has evolved into an international multimedia concern and is continuing to expand. *Realscreen* talks to Parthenon’s key executives and partners about the company’s past, its milestones, and the plans to build upon its strong foundation. **BY KEVIN RITCHIE**

If there’s one drawback to rising success in the television business for Parthenon Entertainment founder and veteran wildlife producer Carl Hall, it’s the decreasing amount of wildlife in his day-to-day life.

“If there’s anything annoying about the future, it’s that they don’t let me out these days,” he says, with a laugh.

Hall founded the London-based company in 2002 after working at the wildlife division of HIT Entertainment, where he served as a managing director and a director in the field, shooting programming for networks such as National Geographic and Discovery Channel. Prior to that, he was a technical director for the Jim Henson Company.

When HIT opted to focus on kids programs, he bought out the 250 hours of factual content he’d amassed to start Parthenon.

He chose to name the company after the ancient temple on the Athenian Acropolis because “it sounded established” and was a nod to the nascent company’s aspirations in

the natural history space.

“Our first ever production was *Stonehenge Rediscovered*, which is one I actually directed,” Hall recalls. “Back in the day we did everything and most of my six staffers were in it wearing various ancient Briton outfits. We didn’t waste any resources.

“That was a really good series,” he adds, “but because of the economics, it was cheaper for me to build *Stonehenge* in South Africa than it was in the UK, so I made it there.”

Over the last 10 years, the staff of six has grown to 70 and Parthenon has evolved into a multimedia rights management company best known for developing, producing and distributing high end, blue-chip wildlife, natural history and science programming such as *Wild Russia*, *Mystery Files*, *Ancient Megastructures* and *Winter in Yellowstone*.

It has since opened sales offices in Canada, Germany and Singapore, and a second UK office in Bristol. The company will also expand into Australia and is establishing

a presence in the United States through a partnership, not yet officially announced, with an American prodco. Hall says the company will soon reveal plans for its first pilot based on an American theme for a U.S. network.

PIONEERING IN COPRODUCTION

In addition to high-end specials, Parthenon is seeking to diversify its portfolio with more long-running programming in the lifestyle, specialist and factual entertainment space with a greater variety of networks and third-party producers. A pioneer in brokering international, multi-party coproduction deals, Hall also intends to explore new international funding models in the years ahead.

“When I first started, coproductions were fairly limited,” says Hall, adding most producers would stick to markets such as the U.S., UK, Germany and France and then look to smaller countries for secondary financing. Instead, he went straight to producers in markets such as South Korea and Italy and

Light the Ocean, a forthcoming special from Parthenon Entertainment



hired local camera operators, who in turn benefited from the international exposure.

"In the early days of Nat Geo, we helped them a lot as they broke into new countries and needed local production," he says. "We went in on their behalf and worked with local producers to make programs that originated in the countries in which they were launching."

This approach gave Parthenon access to locations and stories in markets that might not have had the production savvy a network such as Animal Planet or National Geographic would demand, but were home to locations little seen in U.S. wildlife TV at that point.

"He worked as the go-between with a slightly more green company by taking their project and making it more commercially oriented for the network," offers

Janet Han Vissering,

SVP of development and production for Nat Geo Wild.

One of Parthenon's most successful relationships has been with German pubcaster NDR, with which it partnered to produce a miniseries about Russian natural history in 2009 for NGCI called *Wild Russia*.

"It was an epic film that portrayed footage of animals and landscapes that quite frankly hadn't been seen," says Han Vissering about the six-part series.

The program was produced through an output deal Parthenon struck

with NDR in which it took the broadcaster's licensing fees and made international-quality versions of the programs. Up to that point, the shows coming out of the German market generally had a Eurocentric focus, and thus a limited shelf life.

"Their whole library has been seen by people around the world now," says Hall.

REINVENTING WILDLIFE

Wild Russia aired in the United States on Discovery Communications-owned Animal Planet as part of the cable network's "Wild"



“ Our first production was *Stonehenge Rediscovered...* most of my staff were in it wearing Briton outfits.”

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strand, which has also featured Parthenon-produced programs such as *Wild Japan* and *Viking Wilderness* – programming the network positions as event television.

The strand is part of Animal Planet's shift toward fewer, more highly differentiated hours of natural history programming, partially a response to what the net's VP of programming Rick Holzman calls "retinal burn." With the advent of high-definition and access to less-expensive, higher-quality cameras, many wildlife series started looking the same. Thus Parthenon is one of the companies it continues to turn to for innovative, high-end programs.

"We're looking for them to challenge us in new ways to reinvent the genre with unique access and technology," he says. "Parthenon has great writers and story editors on their projects, and that has not always been the case in the natural history space.

"We've tended to pair natural history production companies with traditional production companies to invent new forms of storytelling," he adds. "That's not something we've been doing with Parthenon though."



Wild Russia aired in the U.S. on Animal Planet and internationally via NGCI

A highly localized approach has also been part of Parthenon's sales strategy. It has an office in Munich that handles Germany, Eastern Europe and Russia, and one in

Singapore that covers the Asian market. In the year ahead, Hall is also looking to open in Australia and synchronize with operations in Canada and the UK.

067

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"We need that local knowledge," he says. "We hardly use agents because we like to sell directly into the territories and that back flow of information helps our whole business."

DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY

This year, Leona Connell, Parthenon's director of global sales and acquisitions for factual, is looking to diversify the company's portfolio with more high-end, long-form factual entertainment, formats, observational documentary, and travel and lifestyle programming, with strong editorial angles and quality on par with its natural history content.

At MIPCOM, Parthenon launched *Cooking Metropolis*, a culinary travel show in which chefs in cities around the world give viewers a city tour and cook a local specialty.

"It's generating interest even though it's not done yet," says Connell. "We thought, 'Wow, this is definitely an area we should be growing into further because broadcasters seem to be crying out for it.'"

"One of the things we're looking to do is work more closely with producers to feed back market requirements so that they can develop content accordingly as well as adapt our existing content for the new digital landscape," she says, citing deals with digital platforms such as Hulu and iTunes for which Parthenon is re-editing long-form programming to tailor for the growing number of tablet users.

Connell works closely with director of production Danny Tipping to ensure the programs she's acquiring complement the company's original content. In 2007, Tipping joined Parthenon to head up its production division after spending a decade on the network side at Discovery Channel in the UK.

"For commissions, they were flexible in how they worked with a number of broadcasters and how deals were done," he says of Parthenon. "That was impressive to me and that isn't always the case with distributors and producers. There was no one model that Parthenon subscribed to. Whatever gets the best shows made is the right way to go."

A landmark for the division is the historical unsolved mystery series *Mystery Files*, produced for NGCI and Investigation Discovery in the United States. At 26 episodes, it's the company's largest series commission to date and has sold to more than 100 countries.



Mystery Files has sold to more than 100 countries so far

Tipping says the success of the program has given the division the opportunity to segue into more series work.

The company also boosted its production infrastructure through acquisitions. In 2009 Parthenon established Parthenon Media Group and acquired a minority share in Halifax, Canada-based production company Arcadia Entertainment, giving it a Canadian partner for international production deals and a yearly addition of 50 hours of programming to its slate. Arcadia, in turn, received a first-look option for exclusive international distribution rights on all of its original productions.

A year later, Parthenon absorbed Bristol-based VFX and graphics shop 422 South, appointing co-founder Andy Davies-Coward as creative director and introducing the studio to its global copro network and commissions.

422 South has started specializing in emerging areas such as data mapping (*Britain From Above*, *Germany From Above*) and photo-realistic, data-based Earth science visualizations (Parthenon's *Drain the Ocean* and forthcoming special *Light the Ocean*).

The affiliation gives Davies-Coward an ability to introduce clients to Parthenon, and its forays into these specialty techniques give him greater input in the development stages.

"I can help shape projects within a mix of other individuals and there's a potential there

to go from simply being reactive to sowing the seeds of future projects," he says.

WHERE TO GROW NEXT?

In the year ahead, Hall hopes to raise the money to grow the Parthenon Media Group even further with more "populist" factual series and high-end docs "in the low-end of the movie business."

"What we do now is almost like the American studio system," he explains. "We put our resources into the ideas and ownership of the script and find the best filmmakers to make those films."

His other main priority is to get a foothold in the United States, the source of 50% of his business. Depending on how the partnership with the East Coast-based production company plays out, he will either buy into that operation or create a new company.

"The only thing [factual] is going to be challenged by is drama being better funded in the future," he says. "The programs we make are among the only ones that hit primetime for family viewing. It's amazing that even exists anymore. [But] they're not sitting down and watching dramas, they watch factual programs, and wildlife and history [programming] has an element of that."

"The whole world of factual," he summarizes, "has grown up." ■



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'TIL DEBT DO US PART

BY ADAM BENZINE

Margaret Atwood, the 72-year-old doyenne of Canadian literature, has teamed up with director Jennifer Baichwal to adapt the author's bestselling 2008 non-fiction book, *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*, into a feature documentary.

The resulting film, *Payback*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January and launched theatrically in Canada in March. Atwood appears in and narrates the doc, and here talks to *realscreen* about making the leap from page to screen.

Is this the first time one of your non-fiction works has been adapted for the screen?

Yes, although it's not the first time I have been in a documentary — there are two other documentaries made about me, and a third one made by Ron Mann about the musical, dramatic and ecological book launch that we did with *The Year of the Flood*, called *In the Wake of the Flood*. But it's the first time that a non-fiction book of mine has been made into a documentary film.

How did the adaptation come about?

I had thought as I was writing it that somebody might do a TV series on this, but that would have been a very different project. But when Ravida Din [producer at the National Film Board of Canada] approached me, I thought, "Well, that sounds pretty good," and we talked about who we might approach to be the director. She had several possibilities, and Jennifer was the one that we settled on.

However, when Ravida first approached her, Jennifer said, "No, I don't want to make a film about money" — although she hadn't read the book at that point or listened to the lectures. She then looked into it and realized that it wasn't about money, except tangentially, and that money debt is only a small part of the human debt credits that we're constantly exchanging. She saw there were a lot of other possibilities, and it took her a year or so to figure out how to approach it.

How much involvement did you have in the making of the film?

Considerable involvement, but not in the way you might think. I'm the thread holding the beads together. We had a lengthy discussion at the beginning in which we talked about all sorts of possibilities, and then [Baichwal] went away to sift through them, and it was she who found the stories. We then did some filming, and she was able to draw on some footage that existed — namely my Massey Lectures.

What role do you think documentaries play in society today?

First of all they impart knowledge in a way that you might not get otherwise — on TV and online we often get little bits, clips and sound bites. But documentary allows you to really go into a subject and explore it.

Are adaptations a mixed blessing for authors?

It depends who does them. If it's really bad, it will just disappear, that'll be the end of it. But if it's really good it's a plus. So what you can do as an author is choose good people. If you choose good people, the results are at least going to be interesting, and in the best of all worlds they're going to be brilliant. But it is another forum — a film is not the same as a book. A film is not a text. ■

Photo: Adam Benzine



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